LIFE AND SOCIETY IN THE VEDIC AGE

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DEDICATED To
the sacred memory of my father

LATE INDRA NARAYAN MITRA

PREFACE

In the present work I have tried to give an outline of the political, social, cultural and economic life of the people from the Ṛgvedic period down to the age of the Sutra. The Ṛgveda gives a long description of the fighting between the Aryans and the primitive inhabitants of the country and the prayer of the Aryans to their divinities for success and well-being in the newly occupied areas. The dawn of the Aryan culture is to be found in the Ṛgveda. The Brahmana literature reveals strong political consciousness of the people in those remote days. The origin of the present government may be traced in the vedic literature.

I am grateful to my revered teacher Dr. Janaki Ballabha Bhattacharyya, M.A., Ph.D.—Reader in Sanskrit, Calcutta University, who encouraged and assisted me in this work.

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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

Av. = Atharvaveda.

Rv. = Ṛgveda.

D. S. = Dharmasutra.

G. S. = Grihyasutra.

INTRODUCTION

Original home of the Aryans is a matter of controversy. There are some literary evidences which indicate that the Vedic Aryans regarded Sapta-Sindhu as their original home. They lived in the Sapta-Sindhu for so many centuries before the Vedic period that they could not remember their original home. The exact date of the Aryan immigration to the North-West of India is quite unknown. According to Maxmuller the primitive home of the Aryans was somewhere in Central Asia. In search of food and pasture they would frequently leave their primitive home. The first division being divided into two branches one migrated to the North-West and the other proceeded towards the Southeast. The Southeastern branch came as far as the Punjab. Here they were divided into two groups according to their religious faith—worshipper of the Devas i. e., the Hindus and the worshipper of the Asuras i. e. the Iranians. The first group remained in the Punjab while the second went to Persia. The hymns of the Ṛgveda were composed by the worshipper of the Devas i.e., the Hindu Aryans. The Aryan settlement in the Indus Valley may be ascribed to the period from 2000 B.C. to 1400 B.C.

"There is a good archaeological evidence for the arrival in North-West India of invaders from the west in centuries following 2000 B.C."[1]

"As regards chronology, however, all that we can glean from the inscriptions at Boghazkoi is that, about the middle of the second millenary B.C. Aryan tribes which worshipped Vedic gods must already have been established in north western India for a very considerable time, as several of these tribes had migrated far back to the west as early as about 1400 B.C."[2]

1 Prehistoric India. Chapter VII Page 255.

2 Winternitz: History of Indian Literature, Page 267.

In the Ṛgveda the land where the Vedic Aryans lived is called by the name of 'Sapta-Sindhu' or the land of the seven rivers which included the Indus or Sindhu with its principal tributaries on the west and the Sarasvati on the east. The land Sapta-Sindhu witnessed the composition of the sacred hymns which describe the early growth and development of the Aryan civilization. Tilak remarks:

"...........Though the Vedas are the oldest records of the Aryan race, yet the civilization or the characteristics and the worship of the deities mentioned therein did not originate with the Vedic bards, but was derived by them from their inter-glacial forefathers and preserved in the forms of hymns for the benefit of posterity; and if one wants to trace the very beginning of the Aryan civilization he must go back beyond the last glacial period and see how the ancestors of the Aryan race lived and worked in their primeval Polar home."[1]

The period of the Vedic literature may be grouped under three heads—the Vedic period, the Brahmana period and the Upanisad period.

Vedic period extended from 20C0 to 1400 B C. The names of Kuru and Panchala were absent in that period: famous Kuru and Panchala war took place in the 13th century B. C. The Brahmana literature was contemporary of the Kurus and the Panchalas; 13th and 12th century B.C. may be ascribed as the period of its composition. King Janaka of the Videhas was associated with the Upanisadic texts hence the period of the Upanisads was 11th century B.C.

In the primitive Aryan society Soma drink was in vogue. At Sapta-Sindhu Soma plant grew in abundance and the offerings of Soma juice would be made to gods. Soma cult is anterior to all the Vedic worships, it is—anterior to all the sacrifices ("Primeval soul of sacrifice." Rv. IX. 2. 10) and father of all the gods ("Father and begetter of the Gods."

1 Tilak: The Arctic home in the Vedas. Page 463.

Rv. IX. 86. 10). Soma had been praised as the creator and lord of all that we perceive.

"These herbs, these milch-kine and these
running waters, all
these, O Soma, thou hast generated.
The spacious firmament hast thou expanded,
and with the light thou hast dispelled the darkness."
(Rv. I. 91. 22.)

Different stages of social development can be traced in the Vedic literature. In the savagery stage people lived upon the trees to protect themselves from the attack of wild animals. Fruits, roots were the only means of sustenance; crude, unpolished stone implements were used as weapons.

"………May Plants, the Waters and the Sky
preserve us, and Woods
and Mountains with their trees for tresses".
(Rv. V. 41. 11)

"May the swift Wanderer, Lord of refreshments,
list to our songs, who speeds through
cloudy heaven.
And may the Waters, bright like castles, hear us,
as they flow onward from the cloven mountain".
(Rv. V. 41. 12)

In the Atharvaveda we find prayer for the protection against wild beasts.

Av. IV. 3. 1. Up from here have stridden three—tiger, man, wolf; since hey! go the rivers, hey! the divine forest tree, hey! let the foes bow.

2. By a distant road let the wolf go, by a most distant also the thief; by a distant one the toothed rope, by a distant one let the malignant hasten.

1 Translations from the Ṛgveda are those of Ralph T. H. Griffith.

3. **Both thy (two) eyes and thy mouth, O tiger, we grind up ; then all thy twenty claws.**
4. **The tiger first of [creatures] with teeth do we grind up, upon that also the thief, then the snake, the sorcerer, then the wolf.**

With the discovery of fire great changes occurred in human society. Savages observed fire in the natural phenomena but did not know how to kindle and then utilize in their services. Sage Atharvan was the first to discover fire.

"Skilled in all lore is Agni, he whom erst
Atharvan brought to life......".

(Rv. X. 21. 5)

Settlement in the villages and production of certain necessary commodities prove the advancement to a certain extent.

Next stage is marked with the domestication and rearing of the animals, cultivation of crops etc. People became acquainted with the art of moulding with clay: meat and milk diet were taken in good Quantity. Smelting of iron ore and the art of writing were known. Jungles were cleared with iron axe and spade to make the ground fit for agriculture and pasturage.

In the savagery stage group marriage was in vogue. Men and women lived in small groups ; members of each group worked collectively and bred within their circle. Union between son and mother, father and daughter, brother and sister were not prohibited. In the Aryan mythology one can get a glimpse of it. The Aitareya Brahmana remarks— Prajapati the great creator married his daughter for the purpose of creation. In the Harivamsa there are many such references. Group marriage was harmful for the growth of the offsprings. It was replaced by the system of consanguine family. Under such system marriage among the same genera-

1 Translations from the Atharvaveda are those of Whitney.

tions were practised. But for the welfare of the future descendants that also was prohibited. It has clearly been reflected in the dialogue hymn of the Ṛgveda between Yama and Yami.

Next came into existence the organization known as 'Gana-gotra' in which kin marriage was not allowed ; members had to marry within unrelated groups.

"Every primeval family had to split up after a couple of generations, at the latest. The original communistic common household, which prevailed without exception until the late middle stage of barbarism, determined a certain maximum size of the family community, varying according to circumstances but fairly definite in each locality. As soon as the conception of the impropriety of sexual intercourse between the children of a common mother arose, it was bound to have an effect upon such divisions of old and the foundation of new household Communities.............one or more groups of sisters became the nucleus of one household, their natural brothers the nucleus of the other."[1]

Sisters of a single group would remain in one household and married the members of different groups (i. e. gotras) who were non-related with each other. The sisters were the wives of all the husbands; the progeny was in the mother line. In the Satapatha Brahmana we find reference to the supremacy of the mother in the Aryan family.

"And as to why, after performing the New-moon sacrifice, he prepares a pap for Aditi,—that moon doubtless is the same as king Soma, the food of the gods: when on that night he is not seen either in the East or in the West, the oblation becomes, as it were, uncertain and unfirm. Now Aditi is this earth, and she, indeed, is certain and firmly established: thereby, then, that oblation of his becomes certain and firmly established......" (XI. 1.-3.3,) Matriarchy is the founder of the Aryan society.

1 Engels: The origin of the family, private property and the State. Pp. 64-65.

In the gotra marriage stable pairing sometimes occurred. A person had a principal wife among other women, he would become the principal husband to her among other gents. Gradually it had developed into pairing family which consisted of one man and one woman. The tie of such marriage was not rigid. If the husband forsook the family children would remain with their mother.

"Thus the evolution of the family in pre-historic times consisted in the continual narrowing of the circle—originally embracing the whole tribe—within which marital community between the two sexes prevailed. By the successive exclusion, first of closer, then of ever remoter relatives, and finally even of those merely related by marriage; every kind of group marriage was ultimately rendered practically impossible; and in the end there remained only the one, for the moment still loosely united, couple, the molecule, with the dissolution of which marriage itself completely ceases. This fact alone shows how little individual sex love, in the modern sense of the word, had to do with the origin of monogamy. The practice of all peoples in this stage affords still further proof of this. Whereas under previous forms of the family men were never in want of women but, on the contrary, had a surfeit of them, women now became scarce and were sought after. Consequently, with pairing marriage begins the abduction and purchase of women—widespread symptoms, but nothing more, of a much more deeply-rooted change that had set in."[1]

In the epic period we hear of such occurences namely abduction of Rukmini by Krishna, of Subhadra by Arjuna etc. Paishachi and Swayamvara systems had their origin in this period. Pairing marriage gradually developed into monogamy where man predominated over woman. Owing

Translations of the Satapatha Brahmana are of Eggeling.

1 Engels: The origin of the family etc. Pp. 78-79.

to some disadvantages of the matriarchal system, patriarchal took the place of it.

"*It (the monogamian family) is based on the supremacy of the man; its express aim is the begetting of children of undisputed paternity, this paternity being required in order that these children may in due time inherit their father's wealth as his natural heirs.*"[1]

Primitive Aryans lived under socio-economic organization known as 'Gana.' Such organization based upon blood relationship. The ten tribes of the Ṛgveda were blood relatives; the five tribes Yadu, Turvasu, Druhyu, Anu and Puru had their father Yajati. The tribes of Anga, Vanga, Kalinga. Pundra, Sumha were also kin-relatives.

Members of the commune had their respective duties—mother was to give birth of the children and distribute food; father was to protect and hunt, daughter had to milk the cattle. Collective labour would be employed in the production and hunting. Things earned would be consumed collectively; private production and private consumption were absent. With the development of productive forces the nature of social organization changed.

From a hymn of the Ṛgveda it is to be inferred that family lived together with undivided shares in the land. Cultivation would be carried on a wide scale later on products would be distributed according to each share.

Rv. IV. 57. 8. Happily let the shares turn up the plough-land, happily go the ploughers with the oxen.
With meat and milk Parjanya make us happy.
Grant us prosperity, Şuna and Sira.

Grazing ground would be regarded as common land: we do not find any such reference as to the individual ownership of such land.

Regarding the early marriage system we get a narrative in the marriage hymn of the Ṛgveda (X. 85).

1 *Ibid.*, Page 102.

In the marriage ritual the bride would be offered first to the three gods—Soma, Gandharva and Agni—before she was united with her human husband.

Rv. X. 85. 40. Soma obtained her first of all; next the Gandharva was her lord. Agni was thy third husband; now one born of woman is thy fourth.

41. Soma to the Gandharva, and to Agni the Gandharva gave: And Agni hath bestowed on me riches and sons and this my spouse.

Wedding took place in the abode of the bride's parents. The bridegroom grasped the hand of the bride and led her round the fire—these two acts constituted the essence of the marriage. Next the bridegroom took the bride home in a car.

Girls had some freedom in the selection of their husbands.

Rv. X. 27. 12. "How many a maid is pleasing to the suitor who fain would marry for her splendid riches?
If the girl be both good and fair of feature, she finds, herself a friend among the people."
Father had some control in the selection of husband of his daughter. He gave her away well adorned and decked with ornaments (Rv. IX. 46. 2; X. 39. 14).

Child-marriage was unknown; girls would be married after puberty.

Rv. X. 85. 21. Rise up from hence: this maiden that a husband. I laud Viṣvavasu with hymns and homage. Seek in her father's home another fair one, and find the portion from of old assigned thee.

22. Rise up from hence, Viṣvavasu: with reverence we worship thee. Seek thou another

willing maid, and with her husband leave the bride.

23. Straight in direction be the paths, and thornless, whereon our fellows travel to the wooing. Let Aryaman and Bhaga lead us: perfect, O Gods, the union of the wife and husband.

24. Now from the noose of Varuṇa I free thee, wherewith Most Blessed Savitar hath bound thee. In Law's seat, to the world of virtuous action, I give thee up uninjured with thy consort.

25. Hence, and not thence, I send thee free, I make thee softly fettered there. That, Bounteous Indra, she may live blest in her fortune and her sons

After marriage women enjoyed the position of honour and respect in the abode of their husbands. They controlled household affairs and took part in the sacrifices and other domestic ceremonies.

Rv. X. 85. 26. Let Pushan take thy hand and hence conduct thee; may the two Aṣvins on their car transport thee. Go to the house to be the household's mistress and speak as lady to thy gathered people.

27. Happy be thou and prosper with thy Children here: be vigilant to rule thy household in this home. Closely unite thy body with this man, thy lord. So shall ye, full of years, address your company.

Girls were generally cultured and educated. In the Ṛgveda we hear of Ghosā and Apālā who composed hymns.

In the Vedic period though monogamy was the principle polygamy was not unknown. But there is no reference to polyandry. Under special circumstances remarriage of widows was permitted: in the Ṛgveda we find such reference.

Rv. X. 18. 8. Rise, come unto the world of life, O woman: come, he is lifeless by whose side thou liest.

Wifehood with this thy husband was thy portion, who took thy hand and wooed thee as a lover.

40. 2. Where are ye, Aşvins, in the evening, where at morn ?

Where is your halting place, where rest ye for the night ?

Who brings you homeward, as the widow bedward draws her husband's brother, as the bride attracts the groom.

Regarding the dowry system it is learnt that in some cases bride price had to be paid by a not very desirable son-in-law. When a girl had physical defect dowry had to be given (Rv. X. 27. 12).

In the Ṛgvedic period Aryans had patriarchal family which was the foundation of social life. Head of the family was the owner of the family property. Father was regarded as the protocol of all that is good ; he possessed absolute control over his sons and daughters. In the Ṛgveda there is no hint as to the extremity of the size of a family ; perhaps three generations might remain in one family. A son after marriage lived with father under his authority: when owing to old age father became incapable to maintain the control, his son would take over the management and then his wife would become the mistress of the family.

Religious literature of India reflects past history, but for the most ancient period we have to depend upon archaeological records. The land of India where the five rivers of the Punjab and to the South the Indus flow—witnessed various groups of prehistoric settlements. The record shows that before the advent of the Aryans well-developed civilization flourished in the area just between the river Zhob in the west of Baluchistan and the river Indus in the west of India.

In this area the relics of about forty old settlements have been discovered which disclose the homogeneity in culture. Harappā is in the Punjab and Mohenjodaro is on the Indus in Sind—these two towns are homologous. In the language of Stuart Piggott "A complete agreement in details of material culture is found over an area stretching from the Makran Coast to Kathiawar, and northwards to the Himalayan foot-hills: a huge irregular triangle with the sides measuring 950 by 700 by 550 miles. From end to end of this territory, from some forty settlement-sites, come pottery vessels of identical mass-produced types; houses are built of baked bricks of standard dimensions; stamp-seals are used engraved with similar scenes and a uniform script, as yet unread; a standard system of weights is recognizable. While some sites are villages, others are small towns, and 350 miles apart stand two cities, each covering at least a square mile of ground, twin capitals of an empire".[1]

It is strange that no picture of successive development of these two cities has yet been discovered. Harappā culture represents agricultural population having cultural relation with the outside world—"There is a certain proportion of painted pottery in the Harappā culture side by side with the mass-produced utilitarian pots of unpainted wares and these painted wares with the designs in black on a deep, lustrous red background, suggest that the main relationships should lie with the red-ware group of cultures in North Baluchistan, rather than those using the buff wares of the Southern region".[2]

Harappā civilization flourished in a highly organized community under the rule of a strong centralized government which used to control both production and distribution. Commercial code and standardized technique of production were in vogue. System of tolls and customs was in practice. There was an urban and literate culture. References to

1 Prehistoric India ch V. Page 133.
2 Ibid., pp. 141-42.

guilds and caste-system may be inferred from the allusions to the heredity of land tenure and trade.

Anthropological report shows that the Indus population consisted of diverse races among whom Proto-Austroloid, Mediterranean, Alpine and Mongoloid may he mentioned. People were probably Dravidians.

Mohenjodaro was a cosmopolitan commercial town; its civilization was produced not by one race but by several races. The city had an organized municipality, improved sanitary system and an arrangement for public health. Irrigation, agriculture and skill in art and architecture highly developed. People were acquainted with maritime vessels. Wild, aquatic and domestic animals were also familiar to them. Religion was the worship of Siva and Mother goddess; nature worship such as worship of the Sun, fire, tree, water, animal etc. was in vogue. For the disposal of the dead body three methods were used (i) burial, (ii) burial after exposure to the birds and beasts, (iii) cremation after which the ashes would be buried.

Regarding the excellency of the civilization of Harappā and Mohenjodaro Sir John Marshall observes—"Indus valley civilization was superior to the Sumerian or Egyptian civilization or any other civilization in any part of the world in that period. The use of cotton was exclusively restricted at this period, in India and was not extended to the Western world until two or three thousand years later. Again, there is nothing that we know of in prehistoric Egypt or Sumer or anywhere else to compare with the well-built baths and commodious houses of the citizens of Mohenjodaro. In those countries much money and thought were lavished on the building of magnificent temples for the gods and on the palaces and tombs of kings but the rest of the people seemingly had to contend themselves with insignificant dwellings of mud. In the Indus valley the practice is reversed and the finest structures are those erected for the convenience of the citizens. Temples, palaces and tombs there might have been

but if so they are either still undiscovered or like other edifices as not to be readily distinguished. We are justified in seeing in the Great Bath of Mohenjodaro and in its many and serviceable houses with their ubiquitous wells and bathrooms and elaborate system of drainage, evidence that ordinary townspeople enjoyed a degree of comfort and luxuary unexampled in the other parts of the civilized world."[1]

On the basis of the archaeological report the date of Indus civilization may be fixed from 3000-1500 B. C. It is older than the Vedic civilization.

Material culture of Harappā and Mohenjodaro knew no change towards improvement. The modes of living and thinking remained unchanged through centuries. Bronze axe, spears and other tools maintained primitive features. People were conversant with the use of copper and bronze, but the use of iron was quite unknown. Reference to grain-pounding indicates the absence of grinding machinery. The abodes of the labourers which were adjoining to their working places were very miserable. In course of time these well developed towns were abolished owing to the fresh invasion of some powerful invaders and the new comers were the vedic Aryans.

The Vedic hymns abound in the description of clashes among the Aryans themselves and the Aryans and non-Aryans who had been described as Dāsas, Dasyus or Anāsah.

Rv. I. 27. 3. Lord of all life, from near, from far, do thou, O Agni evermore protect us from the sinful man.

Rv. I. 29. 7. Slay each reviler, and destroy him who in secret injures us:

The hymns of the Ṛgveda are addressed mainly to a group of deities and to Soma. The highest God is Indra—great warrior and leader in battle. Indra destroyed the strongholds

1 Ancient Indian culture and civilization. Page 43.

of the enemies. These opponents of the Aryans called as Dāsas or Dasyus were of dark complexion, flat nose and lived in fortified strongholds.

Rv. II. 20. 7. Indra the Vritra-slayer, Fort-destroyer, scattered the Dāsa hosts who dwelt in darkness.

For man hath he created earth, and waters, and ever helped the prayer of him who worships.

Av. VIII. 8. 1. Let Indra the shaker shake, he the mighty hero, stronghold-splitter, in order that we may slay by thousands the armies of our enemies.

2. Let the putrid rope, breathing on [it], make yonder army putrid ; seeing afar smoke, fire, let our enemies set fear in their hearts.

3. Crush yonder men out, O Açvattha ; devour them speedily, O Khadira ; let them be suddenly broken like hemp ; let the slayer slay them with deadly weapons.

4. Let the rough-called one make yonder men rough ; let the slayer slay them with deadly weapons ; let them be broken quickly like a reed, tied together with a great net.

5. The atmosphere was the net the great Quarters [were] the net stakes ; therewith encircling [them], the mighty one scattered away the army of the barbarians.

6. Since great [is] the net of the great mighty one, the vigorous—therewith do thou crowd down upon all [our] foes, that no one so ever of them may be released.

7. Great, O Indra, hero, is the net of thee that art great, that art worth a thousand, that

hast hundred-fold heroism ; therewith encircling the army of the barbarians, the mighty one slew a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, a hundred million.

From the archaeological report on Harappā civilization it is learnt that the cities had strongly fortified castles. Among the population there was a large proportion of Proto-Austroloids who had dark complexion, flat nose and unintelligible speech. Hence the report is to make the identification of the Dāsas or Dasyus with the residents of Harappā and Mohenjodaro.

Pre-Aryan civilization in India was overwhelmed by powerful invaders—the Vedic Aryans who were more vigorous and better equipped. Indigenous people lived in fortified areas (puras and durgas): the forts are said to be built of stone or with unbaked bricks. The forts of the Dasyus were the fortified castles of Harappā civilization, which were destroyed by the invaders. "At three sites in Sind, on the top of ruined and deserted Harappā towns or villages, settlements were found which contained evidence of the arrival in the region of new peoples with an alien and more barbaric way of life than that of the complex urban pattern of Harappā. There is a little evidence that similar folk came to Mohenjodaro in the days of its decline, and at Harappā, as at Chanhu-daro in Sind, there was a final occupation of people building rough huts on top of the ruins of the defences and structures of the citadel, and burying their dead in a cemetery dug into the rubbish-tips of the deserted city".[1]

The newcomers invoked Indra to be their helpmate and gave Him an appellation 'Purandara'—destroyer of forts.

Rv. I. 53, 7. Thou goest on from fight to fight intrepidly, destroying castle after castle here with strength......"

1 Stuart Piggott: Prehistoric India. ch. V pp. 142-43.

A hymn refers to the destruction of the mound erected for the protection of Harappā city from flood.

Rv. II. 15. 8. Praised by the Angirases he slaughtered vala, and burst apart the bulwarks of the mountain.

He tore away their deftly-built defences.
These things did Indra in the Soma's rapture.

Other hymns relate—
"... ..thou, slaying Ahi,
settest free the rivers' paths".

(Rv. II. 13. 5)

"All banks of rivers yielded to his manly might........." (Rv. II. 13. 10)

Regarding the Harappā civilization Wheeler said—"The discovery of fortified citadels at Harappā and Mohenjodaro, supplemented by the already identified defences of the Harappān sites of Sutkāgen-dor in Makran, Ali Murād in Sind and others of more doubtful period have changed the picture. Here we have a highly evolved civilization of essentially non-Aryan type, now known to have employed massive fortifications, and known also to have dominated the river system of north-western India at a time not distant from the likely period of the earlier Aryan invasion of that region...... ......Everywhere the houses mounting gradually upon the remains of their predecessors or on platforms of baked and unbaked brick which raised them above the floods, were carved up by new partitions into warrens for a swarming, lower grade population. Streets were encroached upon, lanes wholly or partly choked with mean structures or even with kilns such as would in better times have been excluded from the residential area. Latter day Mohenjodaro and by inference Harappā and the rest, were poor shadows of their former selves. Nevertheless, the ultimate extinction of such a society would be expected to have come from without. And so it

was. In the last phase of Mohenjodaro, men, women and children were massacred in the streets and houses, and were left lying there or, at the best, crudely covered without last rites. On the circumstantial evidence such as these, considered in the light of the chronology as now inferred, Indra stands accused."[1]

Hence Aryan conquest of India resulted with the utter destruction of old cities and civilization. But the people could not be completely vanquished as they were not barbarians or uncultured ; they were unprepared for such violent attack.

1 The Indus civilization. pp. 97-99.

CHAPTER I

PROGRESS OF THE ARYANS

Vedic literature is the oldest literature of the Aryans which throws light on ancient Aryan society, customs, religion and civilization but depicts nothing in favour of the non-Aryans with whom the Aryans came into conflict. From the narration in the Ṛgveda we come to know that the Aryans were surrounded on all sides by the rival tribes who were named as Dāsas and Dasyus. The mantras of the Ṛgveda refer to the struggle of the Aryans against these enemies.

The vedic Aryans were more powerful invaders than the primitive inhabitants of India. The non-Aryans were not strong enough to resist such powerful enemies but they did not surrender themselves calmly. They harassed the new comers in every possible way such as by robbing them, stealing their cattle or falling upon them all on a sudden. In the Ṛgveda there are allusions to the wars of the Aryans with the primitive inhabitants of India whom they disdained. They praised God Indra for His great achievements against their enemies.

Rv. I. 54. 6. (Indra) Thou holpest Narya, Turvasa and
Yadu, and Vayya's son Turviti, Şatakratu!,
Thou holpest horse and car in final battle;
thou breakest down the nine and ninety castles.

Rv. I. 100. 18. He, much invoked, hath slain Dasyus and Simyus
after his wont and laid them low with arrows.
The mighty Thunderer with his fair-complexioned
friends won the land, the Sunlight, and the waters.

Rv. I. 103. 3. Armed with his bolt and trusting in his prowess he wandered shattering the forts of Dāsas.
Cast thy dart, knowing, Thunderer, at the Dasyu;
increase the Ārya's might and glory, Indra.

Rv. I. 174. 6. Thou Indra, Lord of Bays, made strong by impulse, hast slain the vexers of thy friends, who give not.
They who beheld the Friend beside the living were cast aside by thee as they rode onward.

7, Indra, the lard sang forth in inspiration:
thou madest earth a covering for the Dāsa,
Maghavan made the three that gleam with moisture. and to his home brought Kuyavāch to slay him.

8, These thine old deeds new bards have sung, O Indra. Thou conqueredst, boundest many tribes for ever.
Like castles thou hast crushed the godless races, and bowed the godless scorner's deadly weapon.

The Aryans viewed the aborigines with wrath and contempt because they were non-sacrificers and had no faith in Aryan gods. Hence they invoked God Indra to display His prowess against them.

Rv. X. 22. 8. Around us is the Dasyu, riteless, void of sense, inhuman, keeping alien laws.
Baffle, thou Slayer of the foe, the weapon which this Dāsa wields.

Rv. I. 133. 2. O thou who castest forth the stone, crushing the sorceresses' heads.
Break them with thy wide-spreading foot, with thy wide-spreading mighty foot.

Rv. I. 133. 3. Do thou, O Maghavan, beat off
these sorceresses' daring strength.
Cast them within the narrow pit, within
the deep and narrow pit.

Indra helped the warriors in their undertakings against the aborigines.

Rv. IV. 16. 9. Come, Maghavan, Friend of Man,
to aid the singer imploring thee in battle
for the Sunlight.
Speed him with help in his inspired invokings:
down sink the sorcerer the prayerless
Dasyu.

Rv. IV. 16. 10. Come to our home resolved to slay the
Dasyu: Kutsa longed eagerly to win
thy friendship.
Alike in form ye both sate in his dwelling:
the faithful Lady was in doubt between
you.

Rv. VI. 18. 3. Thou, thou alone, hast tamed the Dasyus;
singly thou hast subdued the people for the
Ārya.
Is this, or is it not, thine hero exploit, Indra?
Declare it at the proper season.

Rv. VI. 25. 2. With these discomfit hosts that fight against us,
and check the opponent's wrath, thyself uninjured.
With these chase all our foes to every quarter;
subdue the tribes of Dāsas to the Ārya.

The native population being defeated either took shelter in the forests and mountains or, as a tribute to the conquerors became slaves to the Aryans. The Aryans were already acquainted with the system of slavery. Debt slavery, slavery as a result of defeat in gambling, war slavery etc, were known to them.

Though the Aryans became victorious, they had to undergo frequent wars with the non-Aryans in the newly occupied areas. They cleared jungles, built new villages, extended cultivation and spread their culture. The Ṛgveda describes Agni as the clearer of jungles and preparer of the way for new settlements.

Rv. I. 58. 4. Urged by the wind he spreads through dry wood as he lists,
armed with his tongues for sickles, with a mighty roar.
Black is thy path, Agni, changeless, with glittering waves!
when like a bull thou rushest eager to the trees.

5. With *teeth of flame, wind-driven,* through the wood he speeds,
triumphant like a bull among the herd of cows,
With bright strength roaming to the everlasting air:
things fixed, things moving quake before him as he flies.

Rv. VIII. 60. 12. Agni, made yours by sacrifice, Agni, while holy rites advance;
Agni, the first in songs, first with the warrior steed; Agni to win the land for us.

With the assistance of Agni the immigrants burnt the jungles, drove away the hostile aborigines and made the ground suitable for permanent settlement. Agni by burning the weeds and bushes prepared the ground for cultivation.

Rv. II. 4. 7. Around, consuming the broad earth, he wanders, free roaming like an ox without a herdsman,
Agni refulgent, burning up the bushes, with blackened lines,
As though the earth he seasoned.

People invoked Agni and praised Him for rendering valuable services against their enemies.

Rv. X. 69. 6. All treasures hast thou won, of plains and mountains and quelled the Dāsas' and the Āryas' hatred. Like the bold hero Chyavana, O Agni, mayst thou subdue the men who long for battle.

The aborigines tried to check the progress of the new comers but with no success. A large number was exterminated; others being defeated either yielded to the conquerors or retreated to the hills and forests.

The word Dāsa in the Ṛgveda refers to the human foes of the Aryans.

"Since the Dāsas were in many cases reduced to slavery, the word Dāsa has the sense of 'slave' in several passages of the Ṛgveda. Dāsī, the feminine, always has this sense from the Atharvaveda onwards. Aboriginal women were, no doubt, the usual slaves, for on their husbands being slain in battle they would naturally have been taken as servants."[1]

As the Aryans were to expand their authority over different parts of India, they did not think it wise to keep millions of native population in a humble position in the society. Hence in the age of the Ṛgveda there was going on an amalgamation of the invaders and the native people either through intermarriage or through friendly relations. By means of wealth a dāsa could attain the position of an Aryan.

Vedic cosmology assumes the creation of some divine and semi-divine beings called Devas and Devarsis who guided the people towards progress and development. The Semi-divine Risis'instructed the people in the use of fire, mysteries of sacrifice and the principles of art and agriculture.

Manu is the man par excellence. In the Vedas Manu appears as 'Prajapati' the progenitor of gods as well as of men.

1 Vedic Index of names and Subjects. Vol. I. Page. 357.

Rv. I. 45. 1. Worship the Vasus, Agni! here, the Rudras, the Ādityas, all who sprang from Manu, those who know fair rites, who pour their blessings down.

Manu is regarded as the first institutor of sacrifices and of religious ceremonies.

Rv. X. 63. 7. Ye to whom Manu, by seven priests, with kindled fire,
offered the first oblation with his heart and soul,
vouchsafe us, ye Adityas, shelter free from fears,
and make us good and easy paths to happiness.

Manu instructed men the art of sacrifice and of religious rites to win the favour of gods.

Rv. V. 21. 1. We stablish thee as Manus used, as Manus used we kindle thee.
Like Manus, for the pious man, Angiras, Agni, worship Gods.

Rv. VI. 69. 1. Indra and Vishnu, at my task's completion I urge you on with food and sacred service.
Accept the sacrifice and grant us riches,
leading us on by unobstructed pathways.

Rv. VII. 14. 3. Come, Agni, with the Gods to our invoking, come, pleased, to offerings sanctified with vasbat.
May we be his who pays thee, God, due honour. Ye Gods
preserve us evermore with blessings.

Agni is the God of fire and light, Lord of heaven and earth. He is the slayer of fiends (Rv. I. 6. 20; X. 87) and punisher of sin.

Rv. VII. 1. 13. Guard us, O Agni, from the hated demon, guard us from malice of the churlish sinner:
Allied with thee may I subdue assailants.

Agni is the priest, messenger and oblation-bearer to gods. He is the most essential in every steps of human life. To the house-holder Agni is the match maker and giver of children. Agni regulates the season for marriage and consecrates the marriage. Offering to Agni is an essential part of the marriage ritual.

Rv. V. 3. 2. Aryaman art thou as regardeth maidens: mysterious is thy name, O Self-sustainer.
As a kind friend with streams of milk they balm thee what time thou makest wife and lord one-minded.

Rv. I. 66. 4. ....Master of present and of future life the maiden's lover and the matron's Lord.

Rv. I. 68. 4. Seated as Priest with Manu's progeny, of all these treasures he alone is Lord.
Men yearn for children to prolong their line, and art not disappointed in their hope.

As a household fire Agni is the friend and guardian to the house-holder. For funeral rite Agni has great importance. Atharvaveda describes Agni as the God of Death who stupefies men with his thunderbolt.

For the origination of new Aryan society and culture Manu was instructed by Gods.

Rv. VIII, 22. 6. Ye with your plough, when favouring Manu with your help,
ploughed the first harvest in the sky,
As such will we exalt you, Lords of splendour, now, O Aşvins with our prayer and praise.

In a hymn of the Ṛgveda we find reference to the beginning of agriculture.

Rv. X. 28. 8. The deities approached, they carried axes ; splitting the wood they came with their attendants.
They laid good timber in the fire-receivers, and burnt the grass up where they found it growing.

Manu was the first man to select medicinal herbs which had the capacity to cure diseases and restore good health.

Rv. II, 33. 13. Of your pure medicines, O potent
Maruts, those that are wholesomest and health-bestowing,
Those which our father Manu hath selected, I crave from Rudra for our gain and welfare.

In some respects Aryan culture was inferior to that of the native people. The Aryans borrowed some elements of the Dravidian culture, assimilated and appropriated them thoroughly and transformed in their own way; hence succeeded to predominate. That was strong enough to be imposed upon others: but in several cases old beliefs and institutions could not be completely obliterated.

The language of the Aryans was a better medium of expression. The tribes who came in contact with the Aryans learnt their language and became familiar with their thoughts and ideas. In this way Aryan culture spread among the non-Aryans and in course of time the whole of the east and

the south became Aryanized. In the post Ṛgvedic period the Aryan occupation of the Gangetic Doab was complete and the immigrants began to settle in central India, on the bank of the Varanāvati and further to the east. In the eastward campaign the lead was taken by the Bharatas and the Videghas. Bharatas proceeded along the Yamuna and the Videghas advanced across the Sarasvati and the Sadānirā (Rapti or Gandak). According to Baudhayana "Āryavarta lies to the east of the region where the river Sarasvati disappears, to the west of the black forest (Kalakavana), to the north of the Paripatra (Vindhya mountain) and to the south of the Himalayas; the rule of conduct which prevails there is authoritative." Again, "the inhabitants of Avanti, of Anga (East Bihar) of Magadha (South Bihar) of Saurashtra, of the Deccan uparits, of Sindh and the Sauviras (South Punjab) are of mixed origin. He who has visited the Arathas (in the Punjab), Karaskaras (in the South India), Pundras (north Bengal), Sauviras, Vanga, Kalinga shall offer a Punnastom......Sacrifice."[1]

In the later vedic period we find that Aryanizm had expanded by the river valley of the Ganges and Jumna and covered the Doab region of U. P. Of the new Kingdoms in the east, the most important were Kurus, Panchalas, Kasis, Kosalas and Videhas. By the time of the Upanisads south Bihar, Malawa, Rajputana and Gujarata became Aryanized. But the Aryan influence in the South was not so strong as in the North. Pre-Aryan language and social manners and customs survived to a certain extent.

With the mention of the peculiar laws and customs of the South Baudhayana says—"There is a dispute regarding five practices in the south and in the north. Those peculiar to the south are that they eat in the company of one's wife, eat stale food, marry the daughter of a maternal uncle."[2]

1 Ancient Indian culture and civilization. p. 82.
2 Ibid.

The remark indicates the non-rigidity of Aryan culture among the people of the newly occupied area,

As the Aryans were mainly pastoral, cows and bullocks constituted their chief wealth. In the Ṛgveda we find references to the use of plough. Agriculture formed an important part of the vedic economy. Booty in battle which consisted mainly of herds and flocks had an important place in the economic life.

The Aryans were fair complexioned, they introduced in India the ideas of racialism and colour. Their sense of fair complexion along with their right to receive sacred knowledge led to the distinction between the Aryan and the non-Aryan, twice born and once born—which was the beginning of caste system.

The organization of four asramas is a peculiar feature of early Aryan society. After the upanayana ceremony every twice-born was to pass through the four orders or asramas. The first order was Brahmacharya—that of the student, the second Gārhasthya—that of the householder, the third Vānaprastha that of the ascetic and the fourth Sannyāsa that of the hermit in the wood.

Vedic literature reflects a well-planned system of education. The ceremony of upanayana after which a boy was entitled to begin his study under a teacher—was not prevalent in the Ṛgvedic period. From a study of the Frog hymn in the Ṛgveda (VII. 103) it is to be inferred that the teacher first recited the vedas and the pupils repeated after him in chorus. A son could take his lesson under the care of his father along with neighbouring students. In the post Ṛgvedic period we hear of the ceremony of Initiation after which a boy began his life as a student in the house of a 'guru' or preceptor where he had to lead the chaste life of a Brahmacharin. The student acquired full moral and intellectual training by his constant association with the preceptor. There he enjoyed free food and lodging in return of which he had to pay personal services such as gathering of fuel, tending the cows

and begging alms. At the completion of studies fees would be paid to the preceptor. There was no system of public school. Under famous teachers great centre of vedic learning developed. Art of writing was unknown ; instuuctions would be orally imparted to the pupils.

Hospitality took the position of religious duty. Guests would be honoured with affection and respect. In the society any form of corruption was strictly prohibited.

CHAPTER II

POLITICAL REASONS DETERMINING SOCIAL CHANGES

The Aryans migrated in India. "......these Aryans were rather immigrants than conquerors. But they brought with them strong physiques, a hearty appetite in both solids and liquids, a ready brutality, a skill and courage in war, which soon gave them the mastery of northern India.......... They wanted land and pasture for their cattle, their word for war said nothing about national honour, but simply meant 'a desire for more cows'."[1]

The family (griha or kula) of the Vedic Aryans may be regarded as the basis of the vedic state. A number of related families formed a grama, a number of gramas (villages) formed a Viś (district or clan) and a group of Viś made a jana (tribe). The Vedic Aryans were organized in several tribes which were under the rule of their chiefs who had the title rāja. Among the tribal groups the five allied tribes—Anus, Druhyus, Yadus, Turvasas, Purus; and Bharatas, Tritsus, Srinjayas, Krivis were the most important units.

The Aryans fought under their chiefs. With the development of Territorial organization the chiefs became kings. Will Durant remarks: "It is war that makes the chiefs, the king and the state... ....it stimulated invention, made weapons that became useful tools and arts of war that became arts of peace......... War dissolved primitive communism and anarchism.........introduced organization and discipline... ... property was the mother, war was the father of the state".[2]

Sudas the Tṛtsu king gained a famous victory having historical importance. It was the 'battle of ten kings'. The Ṛgvedic hymn VII. 18, glorifies Indra as the protector of Sudas. Vasishtha—the family priest of Sudas accompanied

1 Will Durant: The story of civilization. p. 397.

2 The story of civilization. pp. 22-23.

the expedition and made prayers for him. Sudas defeated a confederation of ten kings on the bank of the river Parusni.

Rv. VII. 18. 5. What though the floods spread widely,
Indra made them shallow and easy
for Sudas to traverse.

He, worthy of our praises, caused the
Simyu foe of our hymn
to curse the rivers' fury.

6. Eager for spoil was Turvasa Purodas,
fain to win wealth, like fishes
urged by hunger.

The Bhrigus and the Druhyus quickly
listened: friend rescued friend
mid the two distant peoples.

7. Together came the Pakthas, the Bhalānas,
the Alinas, the Şivas, the Vişhānins.

Yet to the Tṛitsus came the Ārya's
comrade, through love of spoil and
heroes' war, to lead
them.

8. Fools in their folly fain to waste her
waters, the parted inexhaustible
Parushṇī.

Lord of the Earth, he with his might
repressed them: still lay the herd
and the affrighted herdsman.

9. As to their goal they sped to their
destruction: they sought Parushni;
e'en the swift returned not.

Indra abandoned, to Sudās the manly,
the swiftly flying foes, unmanly
babblers.

10. They went like kine unherded from the pasture, each clinging to a friend as chance directed.
They who drive spotted steeds, sent down by Pṛiṣni, gave ear, the warriors and the harnessed horses.

Then Sudas had to come to the east of his kingdom to meet the attack of the non-Aryan king Bheda under whose leadership Ajas, Sigrus and Yaksus were united. Sudas defeated those assailants on the Jamuna.

Rv. VII. 18. 18. To thee have all thine enemies submitted: e'en the fierce Bheda hast thou made thy subject.
Cast down thy sharpened thunderbolt, O Indra, on him who harms the men who sing thy praises.

19. Yamunā and the Tṛitsus aided Indra. There he stripped Bheda bare of all his treasures.
The Ajas and the Ṣigrus and the Yakshus brought in to him as tribute heads of horses.

Rv. VII. 33. 3. So, verily, with these he crossed the river, in company with these he slaughtered Bheda.
So in the fight with the Ten Kings, Vasishṭhas! did Indra help Sudas through their devotions.

6. Like sticks and staves wherewith they drive the cattle, stripped bare, the Bharatas were found defenceless:
Vasishtha then became their chief and leader; then widely were the Tritsus clans extended.

The Aryans faced the non-Aryans and gradually extended their eastern frontier.

Divodasa Atithigva of the Bharata tribe defeated a dāsa chieftain named Sambara.

Rv. I. 51. 6. Thou (Indra) savedst Kutsa when Sushna was smitten down ;
to Atithigva gavest Sambara for a prey.
E'en mighty Arbuda thou troddest under foot ; thou from of old wast born to strike the Dasyus dead.

Rv. II. 19. 6. "............And Indra, for the sake of Divodasa, demolished Sambara's nine and ninety castles.

Rv. IV. 26. 3. In the wild joy of Soma I demolished Sambara's forts, ninety and nine together;
And, utterly, the hundredth habitation, when helping Divodasa Atithigva.

The Bharatas marched against the Kikatas,—the non-Aryans living in a country later known as Magadha. While fighting against the Dāsas the Bharatas made alliance with their rival, the Purus. The vedic tribes found it necessary to wage war against the aborigines. "They came into effective conflict with the people alien to their culture who would not suffer the intrusion of foreigners into their ancient and simple habitat. It was but natural that they rose in revolt and the intruding tribes were forced to defend themselves against the armed attacks of the natives of the soil. Thus the defence complex fired their psychological impulses and the result was the outbreak of hostilities".[1]

The tribal states were governed by the kings. Though kingship was hereditary, there are references to the election of a king from the members of the royal family. In several

1 Dikshitar: War in Ancient India. p. 3.

states members of the royal family exercised power in common. The power of a king was not absolute but was checked by Sabhā (council of the greatmen of the tribe) and Samiti (assembly of the whole people). [The true meaning of these two terms is not clear. According to Keith "The Samiti was 'the assembly of the people for the business of the tribe'. and the Sabhā denoted 'the place of assembly which served besides as a centre of social gatherings'."— Cambridge History of India, Vol. I. p. 96.].

Primarily, the king was the leader in war, responsible for the protection of the tribe. In times of peace king dispensed justice and performed sacrifices. The king administered with the assistance of Purohita, Senani (general), gramani (leader of the village), dutas (envoy) and spies. The two popular assemblies known as Sabhā and Samiti had great importance in the government of the country, Samiti had political functions. Sabhā was an organization of aristocrats and not so much political. The assemblies exercised great power in administration and acted as a check to the despotism of the king. Political matters would be discussed in the assemblies, but all the members acted in harmony. In the concluding hymn of the Ṛgveda it has been clearly expressed:

Rv. X. 191. 2. Assemble, speak together: let
your minds be all of one accord.
As ancient Gods unanimous sit
down to their appointed share.
3. The place is common, common
the assembly, common the mind,
so be their thought united,
A common purpose do I lay before you,
and worship with your general oblation.
4. One and the same by your resolve,
and be your minds of one accord.
United be the thoughts of all that all
may happily agree.

Similar idea is to be found in the Atharva Veda also.

Av. VI. 64. 1. Do ye concur; be ye closely combined; let your minds be concurrent, as the gods of old sat concurrent about their portion.

2. [Be] their counsel the same, their gathering the same, their course the same, their intent alike; I offer for you with the same oblation; do ye enter together into the same thought.

3. Be your design the same, your hearts the same, your mind the same, that it may be well for you together.

In the later vedic period changes took place in the sphere of old tribal organization which gradually was strengthened and consolidated. In many cases that led to the growth of powerful territorial units. Many famous old tribes either disappeared or mingled with the new tribes. The Bharatas and the Purus were merged into the Kurus. Another political unit 'Panchalas', according to the Satapatha Brahmana—was formerly called Krivis. Kurus and Panchalas occupy the most important position in the vedic texts.

Fighting for supremacy often took place. As a symbol of supremacy over other kings Rajasuya and Asvamedha sacrifices would be performed by the mighty rulers where the subordinate kings had to execute menial services; that was the symbol of submission to the power of a mighty empire-builder. The Aitareya Brahmana used the terms Samrat, bhoja, virat and rājan for the rulers of the east, south, north and the middle country. Rājan was used for an ordinary ruler; Adhirāja, Rājādhiraj, Samrat etc. were the titles for the various gradations of rulers. The terms Ekarat and Sarvabhauma were used for those who had conquered the kings in four directions. Therefore it is to be surmised that in the Brahmana period royal power increased.

In the vedic period birth of a daughter though was not

desired, if born would have been treated with consideration. Proper education would be imparted to them also.

In the later vedic period status of women degraded. Women could not inherit or own property, their earnings if any would go to their fathers and husbands. Birth of a daughter would be considered as a source of misery, though there are instances of Gārgi, Maitreyi to prove the prevalence of female education. Women were excluded from the right of the upanayana ceremony.

In the epic period polygamy was practised by the kings and princes mainly for political reasons. For the ordinary people it was allowed under certain circumstances. Marriage would be negotiated by the parents; system of Swayamvara prevailed.

In the early vedic period we find references only to the distinction between the white-skinned Aryans and the dark-skinned aborigines who had been conquered by the Aryans and were called Dāsas or Sudras.

Frequent wars, increasing complexities in the social, economic and political conditions and the inclination towards the specialization in labour led to the formation of hereditary occupational groups. Those who specialized in the knowledge of the vedas and performed religious rites were called 'Brahmanas.' Those who fought in war and were engaged in political activities were called Kshatriyas. General mass of the Aryans—the traders, agriculturists, craftsmen were known as Vaisyas. Sudras were the conquered Dāsas or Dasyus who were to perform menial services.

The Brahmanas that is the priestly class and the Kshatriyas—the warrior class were superior to the Vaisyas, the position of the Vaisyas was superior to that of the Sudras. It is noteworthy that in the early period caste system was not so rigid.

In the Ṛgvedic period caste system did not exist. The word 'varna' in the Ṛgveda was a distinguishing mark between the Aryan and the non-Aryan (Rv. III. 34. 9.)

In the Ṛgveda the word 'vipra' was used as adjectives with reference to gods and not to denote priestly caste. Similarly the word 'Kshatriya' meant 'strong' and not military caste. The word 'Brahmana' was to suggest the composer of hymn.

"Zimmer connects the change from the casteless system of the Ṛgveda to the elaborate system of the Yajurveda with the advance of the vedic Indians to the east.........The needs of a conquering people evoke the monarch; the lesser princes sink to the position of nobles; for repelling the attacks of aborigines or of other Aryan tribes, and for quelling the revolts of the subdued population, the state requires a standing army in the shape of the armed retainers of the king, and beside the nobility of the lesser princes arises that of the king's chief retainers..........At the same time the people ceased to take part in military matters, and under climatic influences left the conduct of war to the nobility and their retainers, devoting themselves to agriculture, pastoral pursuits and trade. But the advantage won by the nobles over the people was shared by them with the priesthood, the origin of whose power lies in the Purohitaship.........."[1]

Hereditary caste system was absent in the vedic period.

Rv. IX. 112. 3. A bard am I, my dad's a leech,
mammy lays corn upon the stones.
Striving for wealth, with varied plans, we follow our desires like kine. Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.

There were no strict prohibitions with regard to intermarriage, occupation and interdining.

The marriage hymn in the Ṛgveda (X.85) reflects the idea that even in the remote past marriage was popular. In the Brahmana literature marriage had been regarded as essential. In the Sutra literature, we find the mention of eight

1 Vedic Index of names and Subjects. vol-2. pp 248-49.

forms of marriage—Brahma, Daiva, Prājāpatya, Ārsha, Gandharva, Asura, Rākshasa, Paisācha. Great importance had been attached to the form of marriage for securing good progeny. Out of those eight forms only first four forms were approved by the Sutrakaras.[1]

" Gautama (IV.15) states that some teachers approve of the first six forms of marriage. In this connection Baudhayana (I.11.20.10-15) says out of these forms of marriage the first four are recommended for a Brahmana ; among these four also each preceding form of marriage is better than the following one. Of the remaining four forms each succeeding form is more sinful than the preceding one ; and among them, too, the sixth (Āsura) and the seventh (Rākshasa) are in accordance with the disposition of the Kshatriyas, because strength is the prominent trait of their character. The fifth (Gandharva) and the eighth (Paisacha) are for the Vaisyas and the Sudras respectively, because they do not exercise proper control over their wives due to their pre-occupation with tillage and service."[2] The Brahma form of marriage is thus the best form of marriage, it is therefore extolled by all the Sutras.

Regarding the marriage ceremony different Grihya Sutras differ in respect of some rites ; it is perhaps owing to local customs and conditions. Author of Āçvalāyana Grihya Sutra (I.7.1.) says that the ' customs are diverse ' and so he mentions only those rites which are in common practice. Considering the Hindu ceremonies it may be expressed that Indian ritual has preserved the elements of the pre-historic period. Rules regarding the marriage as laid down in different books vary little from that of the present day or of the Ṛgvedic period. In the marriage ceremony it was the common practice that the bridegroom being attended by his friends and relatives would proceed to the bride's home where the

1 Gautama D. S. IV. 14. ; Āpastamba D. S. II. 5. 12. 3.
2 India of Vedic Kalpasutras, p. 206.

bride's fathei received him. The marriage ritual would be performed by the priest: bride's father gave her to the groom who promised never to behave falsely to her. Offerings of ghee and rice would be made to the sacred fire round which they were to move. The couple took seven steps together. The bridegroom took the bride's hand and murmured: This am I, that art thou, that art thou, this am I. Heaven am I and Earth art thou; the (feminine) Ric (Ṛgveda verse) art thou, the Sāman am I. Be thou devoted to me. The bride would mount a stone as an emblem of firmness. Next the groom took the bride home where sacrifice to the domestic fire would be performed.

Fees would be paid to the priest who performed the marriage ritual. While the groom belonged to the same caste as that of the priest a cow was to be given by the groom as fee. In case the groom belonged to the royal or rājanya class village would be given as fee; If the groom was a farmer or a trader that is, belonged to the third order —a horse was to be given.

In the Atharvaveda we find references as to the existence of joint family. Members had common interest for the welfare of the family. In a hymn of the Atharvaveda (III.30) prayer had been made for the preservation of unity among the members. Duties of the members had also been expressed.

Av. III. 30. 1. I make you possessors of heart and brain. I make you free from malice. One should behave with another as a cow behaves with her just born calf.

2. Let the son follow the father in his vows. Let him be one-minded with his mother. Let the wife talk with her husband sweetly and lovingly.

3. Let no brother cherish ill-will against his brother; nor a sister against her sister.

Pursuing uniform ideals let them have affectionate talk.

4. I fix that principle of life to be pursued in your family, whereby learned people might not disunite nor entertain ill will against each other. Let it be an eye-opener to people.

5. Do not be disunited. Keep your position or respect. Be cautious in your dealings. Increase each other's prosperity, move harmoniously like the spokes of a wheel. Move on in your life speaking sweetly with one another. I mean you to be co-working and one-minded.

6. Drink together and eat together. I unite you together. Just as spokes of a wheel revolve round the same centre, similarly, you should combine round the same household fire (worship together).

7. I mean you all to be co-working, one- minded having same ideals and united in efforts. Like wise people, protect your vital interests. Let your mornings and evenings be happy and harmonious.

But there are several instances in the Atharvaveda which witnessed the despotism on the part of the father or head of the family over other members. Head of the family might be an autocrat, he could deprive any member of his right of the property or could sell him for slavery, or could inflict any kind of punishment. The story of Sunahsepa in the Aitareya Brahmana (vii. 15, 18) may be taken as an example of such despotism.

There are also such remarks which reveal the fact that sons could divide their paternal property among themselves even during the lifetime of their father. Father or head of

the family could not deprive any member at his own discretion.[1]

From the study of the Sutra literature it is clear that joint family system was still in existence. According to the injunction of the Gṛhyasutras after the death of the householder the eldest son would kindle the Gṛhya fire (Sānkhāyana G.S.I. 15; Kausika Sutra 69. 1). In some cases the family would be so large that food could not be cooked in one kitchen for all the members of the same family. Under such circumstances Baliharana ceremony was to be performed with the food cooked in the kitchen of the householder.[2] Gautama Dharmasutra (XXVIII. 3) remarked that after the death of the father the eldest son might be the owner of the whole property and like the father to support his brothers.

1 Aitareya Brahmana. V. 14.
2 Gobhila G. S. I. 4. 24; Khadira G. S. I. 5. 37.

CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC LIFE

In the Vedic period monarchy was the normal system of political organization. There are a few references to the republican form of government.

In the later Vedic period as the number and size of the Aryan kingdoms grew larger, the importance of the royal rank increased. Powerful and ambitious kings tried to extend their supremacy over neighbouring kingdoms. In the Aitareya Brahmana we find references to the origin of kingship (I. 14). Gods and demons were engaged in fighting with one another. The gods being defeated proclaimed 'it is because we have no king that the demons defeat us, so let us elect a king.' Gods elected a king and through his help became victorious. The story suggests that origination of kingship primarily based upon military necessity.

Monarchy was normally hereditary and this is to be inferred from the reference of 'dasa—purusham—rajyam in the Satapatha Brahmana (XII. 9.3.3) and also from the Aitareya Brahmana (VIII. 12. 17).

Sometimes selection would be made by the people and it was probably from the royal family or from the members of the noble clans. In the Aitareya Brahmana we find another story with reference to Indra's kingship. The gods with Prajapati said 'this one is among the gods the most vigorous, the most strong, the most valiant, the most perfect who carries out best any work (to be done). Let us instal him in the kingship.'[1] This suggests the origination of kingship on the basis of election. In the Atharvaveda we find such reference.

Av. III. 4. 2. Thee let the people choose unto kingship, thee these five divine directions; rest at the

1 VIII. 4. 12.

summit of royalty, at the pinnacle; from
thence, formidable share out good things
to us.

The king himself was the leader in battle, punisher of evildoers and upholder of law and dharma. He possessed high intellectual capability, knowledge in the Sacred texts and aptitude for philosophical discussions. In the White Yajurveda we meet with a piece of advice given to a king (X. 27) to become a competent ruler.

The importance of the assemblies such as Sabhā and Samiti decreased, Owing to the vastness of the kingdom frequent meetings became impossible. But there were also such cases where the will of the people acted upon the king. "Royal power was clearly insecure: there are several references to kings being expelled from their realms, and their efforts to recover their sovereignty, and the Atharvaveda contains spells in the interest of royalty."[1]

In the Satapatha Brahmana we find such occurence; "Now Balhika Pratipiya, the Kauravya king, heard (people say) this—'There is that Dushtaritu Paumsayana who has been expelled from the kingdom which has come down to him through ten generations; for him that Kākra Sthapati wants to perform the Sautramani and to confer upon him the dominion over the Sringayas." (XII. 9.3.3).

In the Atharvaveda we find a prayer for the restoration of a king to his former kingdom.

Av. III. 3. 1. He hath shouted; may he be protector of his
own here; O Agni, bend apart the two
widened firmaments; let the all-possessing
Maruts harness thee; lead thou hither with
homage yon man of bestowed oblation.

2. Indra, the inspired one, however far away,
let the ruddy ones set in motion hither

1 Vedic Index of names and Subjects, Vol. 2. p. 211.

in order to friendship, when the gods venture
for him a gayatri, a bṛhati, a song,
with the Sautramoni (ceremony).

3. For the waters let king Varuna call thee;
let Soma call thee for the mountains;
let Indra call thee for these subjects;
becoming a falcon, fly unto these subjects.

4. Let the falcon lead hither from far the one
to be called, living exiled in others' territory;
let the (two) Açvins make the road for thee
easy to go; settle together about this man ye
his fellows.

5. Let thine opponents call thee; thy friends
have chosen (thee) against [them]; Indra and
Agni, all the gods, have maintained for thee
security in the people.

6. Whatever fellow disputes they call, and
whatever
outsider—making him go away, O Indra, then
do thou reinstate this man here.

According to Satapatha Brahmana both monarchy and popular assemblies were divine institutions. In spite of the existence of the popular assemblies the importance of the royal rank grew up. The king's main function was to lead in battle and protect the state and subjects. A hymn in the Atharvaveda addressed a new king thus:

Av. VI. 87.1. I have taken thee; thou hast become
within; stand thou fixed, not unsteady; let
all the people want thee; let not the kingdom
fall away from thee.

2. Be thou just here; be not moved away;
like a mountain, not unsteady; O Indra,
stand thou fixed just here; here do thou
maintain royalty.

Av. VI, 88.1. Fixed is the Sky, fixed the earth, fixed all this world of living beings, fixed these mountains; fixed [is] this king of the people.

2. Fixed for thee let king Varuna, fixed let divine Brihaspati, fixed for thee let both Indra and Agni maintain royalty fixed.

3. Fixed, unmoved, do thou slaughter the foes; make them that play the foe fall below [thee]; [be] all the quarters like-minded, concordant; let the gathering (Samiti) here suit thee [who art) fixed.

The king carried on administration with a large body of officials. In the consecration ceremony Purohita (priest), Rajanya (noble), Suta (charioteer), the Senani (army commander), the Gramani (village headman), the Bhagadugha (collector of taxes), ksattri (chamberlain), Samgrahitri (treasurer), Akṣavapa (Superintendent of dicing), Mahisi (chief Queen) were prominent figures. Purohita had an important position. His duty was not confined to religious matters, he was also the counsellor of the king. Senani, Gramani, Bhagadugha, Purohita, Suta, Samgrahitri, Aksavapa were called 'Ratnins' or 'Jewels.' The officials had great influence on the machinery of the government.

The king of the epic period was not an autocrat, rather, acted according to the will of his brothers, councillors and populace, He had to recognize the laws of kulas (families), Jatis (castes), Srenis (guilds) and Pugas (communities). In case the legal heir had any bodily defect he would not be installed. The king was the leader of the people both in times of war and peace. He started expedition with the advice of his ministers and with the blessings of the priest. The king lived with grandeur and pleasure and himself dispensed justice. Sabhā was reduced to the position of a body for consultation in the matters of war. Administration would be carried on with the help of Mantriparisad (ministry),

subordinate rulers (Sāmantas), the yuvaraja (crown .prince), the aristocracy and high officers.

The village or grāma enjoyed local autonomy under the leadership of Gramani or village chief, selected by the king. He was entrusted much with civil power than military.

Ruler's income consisted of the tribute paid by the conquered tribes, and contributions made by the subjects. The reference to the share of village, horses and kine in the Atharvaveda[1] perhaps meant a kind of taxation. Kshatriyas and the Brahmanas were exempted from paying the taxes.

The epithet of the king 'devourer of the people' indicates that royal householder and the king's retinue received for their own maintenance good grains and other necessary things as contributions from the people. People would give a share of their land to the king (Av. IV. 22. 2). The king had also a share of the booty in war. It appears that common people who followed the occupations like agriculture, cattle rearing, arts, crafts etc. and formed the backbone of royal power, had to tolerate the burden of taxation.

Early Aryan society was not free from distinction between the rich and the poor. In the Ṛgveda we hear of 'Maghavan' and 'Mahakula' who were perhaps the representatives of the rich; Maghavans were renowned for their bounty.

Rv. IV. 17. 8. The ever-slaying, bold and furious Indra,
the bright bolt's Lord, infinite, strong
and mighty,
Who slayeth Vṛitra and acquireth booty,
giver of blessings, Maghavan the bounteous.

King and his retinue possessed great wealth which consisted of the produce from land, money, gold, elephants, horses etc. Unequal distribution of wealth, honour and prestige has been revealed. We hear of such people who were destitute,

1 Av. IV. 22.2 Portion thou this man in village, in horses in kine; unportion that man who is his enemy; let this king be the summit of authorities; O Indra, make every foe subject to him.

forlorn and pining with hunger; they begged for food. The entire hymn X. 117 of the Ṛgveda repeatedly entreated the rich to be generous to the poor.

Rv. X. 117. 1. The Gods have not ordained hunger to be our death; even to the well-fed man comes death in varied shape. The riches of the liberal never waste away, while he who will not give finds none to comfort him.

2. The man with food in store who, when the needy comes in miserable case begging for bread to eat, Hardens his heart against him—even when of old he did him service—finds not one to comfort him.

3. Bounteous is he who gives unto the beggar who comes to him in want of food and feeble.

Success attends him in the shout of battle.
He makes a friend of him in future troubles.

4. No friend is he who to his friend and comrade who comes imploring food, will offer nothing.

Let him depart—no home is that to rest in—and rather seek a strange to support him.

5. Let the rich satisfy the poor implorer, and bend his eye upon a longer pathway. Riches come now to one, now to another, and like the wheels of cars are ever rolling.

6. The foolish man wins food with fruitless labour: that food—I speak the truth—shall be his ruin. He feeds no trusty friend, no man to love him. All guilt is he who eats with no partaker.

7. The ploughshare ploughing makes the food that feeds us, and with its feet cuts through the path it follows. Better the speaking than the silent Brahman; the liberal friend out-values him who gives not.

9. The hands are both alike: their labour
differs. The yield of sister milch-
kine is unequal.

Twins even differ in their strength and
vigour: two, even kinsmen,
differ in their bounty.

Among the rich misers were in a position of contempt and disrespect.

In the post Ṛgvedic period such unequalness increased to a greater extent. Money was the symbol of high status in society; distinction between rich and poor became conspicuous. In the Atharvaveda prayers had been made for the removal of poverty.

From the age of the Ṛgveda down to the age of the Brahmanas economic life of the people remained almost unchanged with the exception of wide knowledge in the use of various metals and in other old practices.

In the fore part of the vedic period rural civilization developed. Economy of the country was mainly rural. Most of the people lived in villages with agriculture, cattle-rearing and cottage industries. Villages were almost self-sufficient and could produce almost everything which were necessary for daily life.

Carpentry was an exalted occupation. In the vedic literature different kinds of industries had been mentioned. In the post Ṛgvedic period economic condition of the people improved and found expression in the Paustika hymns of the

the Atharvaveda. Metals like iron, copper and gold were in vogue.

Surplus products were exported in exchange of rare commodities from other places. Both inland and foreign trade were known (Rv. I. 56. 2). There was no problem of unemployment owing to ample scope for agriculture and cattle-rearing. Organization of grand sacrifices and the bestowal of large gifts prove the wealthiness of the people in the sutra period. But there was not equal distribution of wealth, as the society had both rich and poor people.

In the Atharvaveda we find frequent mentions of the Vaisyas among whom were the 'Sresthins', who earned money from trade and cultivation. Profession of the merchants was hereditary.

Among the Vedic people, there was a common belief that gods being pleased with worship and sacrifices grant boons and prosperity to the performer. With that faith people performed sacrificial rites. The simplest sacrificial ritual known as Grihya or domestic sacrifice would be performed by the householder himself or with the assistance of a single priest according to his ability. There were also grand sacrifices known as Srauta sacrifices which could be undertaken by kings, nobles and richmen only. Large number of priests headed by four chief priests would be appointed to perform the numerous and complicated rites for the sake of Yajamana, who himself took very little work. Three sacred fires would be used and prayers offered to a large number of deities. For the Grihya sacrifices only domestic fire was to be used. Elaborate sacrifices could be performed by the wealthy people as those were far beyond the means of ordinary householder. Priests received large payments in the form of 'Dakshina' for their performances. Cow was the usual fee for sacrifice. Personal property could be given as gifts but not land because land was regarded as allied with the clansmen.[1] "The later 'Dāna-stutis' or

1 Satapatha Brahmana VII. 1. 1. 4.

'Praises of Gifts' in the Ṛgveda immensely exaggerate these donations and the exaggeration grows in the Brahmanas."[1]

In the Satapatha Brahmana we find the mention of sacrificial fees for the Purusamedha sacrifice: " What there is towards the middle of the Kingdom other than the land and the property of the Brahmana, but including the men, of that the eastern quarter belongs to the Hotri, the southern to the Brahmana the western to the Adhvaryu and the northern to the Udgatri; and the Hotrikas share this along with them " (XIII. 6. 2. 18).

As the rituals grew complicated, importance of the services of the priests was realized ; the sacrificer esteemed their functions. "For the priests were not thought merely to assist and lead the devotions of their people, in praying and rendering thanks for happy events, such as a victory gained, a successful expedition, for the prospering of crops and cattle, for increase in offspring and wealth. No, these results were directly attributed to and thought to depend on, the praying (Brahma) of the priests, their text-reciting, the sacrificial rites performed by them ; they would not have taken place if the priests had not done these things or had not done them in the right way. This is perfectly illustrated by a very effective passage in one of the historical Vasishtha hymns."[2]

Priests would be maintained by the richmen, 'the Maghavans' in the Ṛgveda. In the sacrificial organization the number of the priests and the amount of gifts to be paid to them would be increased according to the social position of their patrons. That was responsible for the growing up of the hankering and greediness of the priests, as their ambitions aggravated to a great extent. The position of the king's purohita was very covetable. Priests expressed their satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the gifts :

1 Vedic Index of names and subjects. Vol. I. p. 336.
2 Vedic India. pp. 386-87.

"Sometimes approval is expressed in a cool, almost condescending tone: 'Not the most carping mortal, ye warriors, can find fault with you.' But when a priest is dissatisfied, he is not slow in expressing his displeasure, usually in the form of sneers and sarcasm. A Prithu (Parthian) king, who gave only two horess and twenty cows for a victory, is taunted with being hard to get anything from, while another is likened to a Pani chief and dismissed with the ironical remark: 'That is why our loyal singers [Priests] have so much to say in praise of Bribu, that most liberal of princes. The Maghavans [Princes] give out of ostentation."[1]

As the primitive commune system broke down, military function became the sole duty of the Kshatriyas and the proceeds of war were considered as the property of the ruling class. 'Danam' i. e. distribution of wealth to the favourites became the charity and virtue of the king. In this way social property was being enjoyed by the limited classes of people i. e., the Kshatriyas and the Brahmanas. Whereas in the days of the commune social property was for the protection of the weak and infirm against starvation.

1 Vedic India. pp. 384-85.

CHAPTER IV

CULTURAL ASPECT

People in the vedic period were solely theists. They contemplated life and the world from the spiritual standpoint and had no scientific outlook. In the post vedic literature systems of Indian philosophy explained the creation of the world and its living beings on scientific basis. But in the vedic literature we find god and some invincible powers as the sole agent of creation and sustenance.

The vedic Aryans worshipped many gods not because of the fear of natural phenomena but for gaining their favours. All the natural phenomena such as the sky, thunder, rain, air etc. were believed to be guided by their presiding deities: people looked at them with awe and wonder. Favourable condition of nature was considered as the boon from the deities while natural devastations were taken to be their wrath. The hymns of the Ṛgveda were mainly for the glorification of the gods in order to appease them. Indra was the god of war; in times of war people invoked him earnestly and ascribed the victory to His credit. God was regarded as the ruler, ordainer of the period of life, protector of men and giver of happiness. World would be comprehended as a place where one could live happily through the benevolence of god.

In the pre-vedic period the religion of the Aryans was a form of Nature-Worship. Natural phenomena were conceived as the expression of some spiritual beings—manifestations of various gods. For the different appearances of the sky different deities were imagined. The primitive divinity was cherished in the vedic period also. Varuna was the god of the sky; in the Ṛgveda many hymns were ascribed to him (Rv.I. 24. 6-10; VII. 86. 3-7; VII. 89. 1-5).

Indra was conceived as the producer of rain; dark clouds were the demons. Indra with his thunderbolt, stroke the demons and made the waters fall in showers. Maruts—the gods of storm helped Indra in his struggle with the demons. Indra's feats in producing the rain had been described in the Ṛgveda.

Rv. I. 32. 1. I will declare the manly deeds of Indra, the first that he achieved, the Thunder-wielder. He slew the Dragon, then disclosed the waters, and cleft the channels of the mountain torrents.

2. He slew the Dragon lying on the mountain: his heavenly bolt of thunder Tvashṭar fashioned. Like lowing kine in rapid flow descending the waters glided downward to the ocean.

3. Impetuous as a bull, he chose the Soma, and in three sacred beakers drank the juices. Maghavan grasped the thunder for his weapon, and smote to death this firstborn of the dragons.

4. When, Indra, thou hadst slain the dragons' firstborn, and overcome the charms of the enchanters, Then, giving life to Sun and Dawn and Heaven, thou foundest not one foe to stand against thee.

5. Indra, with his own great and deadly thunder smote into pieces Vṛitra, worst of Vṛitras. As trunks of trees, what time the axe hath felled them, low on the earth so lies the prostrate Dragon.

6. He, like a mad weak warrior, challenged Indra, the great impetuous many-slaying Hero. He, brooking not the clashing of the weapons, crushed—Indra's foe—the shattered forts in falling.

8. There as he lies like a bank-bursting
river, the waters taking courage flow above
him.
The Dragon lies beneath the feet of torrents
which Vṛitra with his greatness had
encompassed.
10. Rolled in the midst of never-ceasing currents
flowing without a rest for ever onward,
The waters bear off Vṛitra's namelese body.;
the foe of Indra sank to during darkness.
11 Guarded by Ahi stood the thralls of Dāsas, the
waters stayed like kine held by the robber.
But he, when he had smitten Vṛitra, opened the
cave
wherein the floods had been imprisoned.
12 A horse's tail wast thou when he, O Indra,
smote on thy bolt;
thou, God without a second,
Thou hast won back the kine, hast won the
Soma;
Thou hast let loose to flow the Seven Rivers.

Indra recovered light from the seizure of Panis. In that exploit He took the help of Saramā i.e. the Dawn.

Mitra was the name of the bright Sky of the day. Varuna, Indra, Mitra, Dyu were the principal Sky gods.

The deity Aditi was regarded as expression of the Infinite. In the Ṛgveda we find the word Ādityas—sons of Aditi but who were the Ādityas are not mentioned. From the hymns IX. 114 and X. 72 it is learnt that the Ādityas were seven in number. Pusan—the Sun, was benefactor to the shepherds and the cattle. He protected and guided men and cattle in their right path. Vishnu as Sun god was not so important in the vedic period. Agni for his various activities was held with high esteem. Maruts or Storm gods were praised more than vāyu or air in the Ṛgveda. Rudra, father of Maruts was a fierce god.

The Ṛgvedic hymn glorified Yama—the king of the dead and his realm.

Rv. X. 14. 1. Honour the king with thine oblations, Yama,
Vivasvān's son who gathers men together,
Who travelled to the lofty heights above us,
Who searches out and shows the path to many.
2 Yama first found for us a place to dwell in:
This pasture never can be taken from us.
Men born on earth tread their own paths that lead
them whither our ancient Fathers have departed.

Aṣvins were the physicians and healers of diseases. They were praised for their acts of kindness.

Brihaspati or Brahmanaspati—personification of the power of prayer-was the lord of hymn.

Ushas—the dawn, Saraswati the goddess of the river of that name and Night were the important female deities.

Sacrifice was the form of cult which the Vedic Aryans devoted to divinities. In the language of Oldenberg "The gods have so far grown beyond human dimensions that the magic spells which could compel them at the will of man, no longer appear as the proper agency with which to influence them. And on the other hand, they are as yet too far removed from pure spirituality for a purely spiritual form of adoration. The worshipper may and must make himself acceptable to them by the simplest measures, industriously, loudly, even obtrusively. Resembling man as they do, they eat and drink like men. Accordingly, offerings of food and intoxicating drink were needful, in order to fortify them and to stir them to mighty actions. They had to be flattered; they were to be addressed in the most artfully agreeable style, and in the most superlative expressions possible as to their grandeur and their splendour".[1]

1 Ancient India its language and religion. p. 79.

The Vedic sacrifice was very simple in its outward aspect; no temple, no images of the gods had to be erected. The Ṛgveda mainly concerned with the great sacrifices which could be performed only by the wealthy people. In the Grihya Sutras small domestic sacrifices had been described. Domestic sacrifices could be performed by the householder himself or by some other person acting on behalf of him. The oblation of cooked food, of rice or barley were offered into the fire with proper recitation of the sacred mantras. For special cases animal sacrifices would be performed. Srauta Sacrifices were elaborate and complicated, hence required the services of a large number of priests. "It is a peculiarity of the Vedic cult of the sacrifice, that it concerns itself chiefly with human interests viewed as a whole; but still it was an unavoidable retention, that the supernatural forces should be put into action, upon occasion, for individual and particular situations, in behalf of want or suffering at some particular moment. It is here that the old witchcraft especially retained whatever was left to it of its former importance, in the Vedic age. He who wished to drive away evil spirits, or, the substance supposed to have brought an illness, or, similarly, some guilt, had recourse still, as in former ages, to fire, which consumes the hostile thing, or to water which washes it away, or he chased the spirits away with din and alarms, blows and bow-shot. He who wished to produce rain, proceeded much like the rain-conjurer among the savages of our day. He put on black robes, and slew in sacrifice some black—coloured beast, in order to attract the black clouds with which it was designed to cover the sky; or he threw herbs into the water that the grass of his pastures might be splattered by the divine waters. He who wished to prepare himself for particularly holy rites, acted just as the modern savage does, when he strives to transport himself into the exalted state in which man may enjoy communion with the gods'[1]

1 Ancient India its language and religion. pp. 82-83.

People believed the existence of some demons and goblins who had fierce look, cruel nature and always eager to do harm. Men prayed to gods to drive away the evil spirits from their surroundings. In the Grihya-sutras of Bhāradvāja and Hiranyakesin we find a description of these evil spirits.

"Wearing variegated garments, the servants of Kubera, sent by the king of demons, all of one common origin, walk through the village, wishing (to harm) those who are unprotected. Svāha!"

"Kill them! Bind them!, thus says this messenger of Brahman. Agni has uncompassed them. Indra knows them; Brihaspati knows them; I, a Brahmana, know them who seize (men), who have prominent teeth, rugged hair, and hanging breasts Svāha!"

"The night walkers, wearing ornaments on their breasts, with lances in their hands, drinking out of skulls. Svāha!"

"Their father Uchchaihsravyakarnaka walks in front of them; their mother walks in the rear, seeking Vidhura (distress) in the village. Svāha!"

"Their sister, night walker, looks at the family through the rift (sandhi) of the door—she who wakes the sleeping (child), whose mind is turned on the wife that has become the mother. Svāha!"[1]

In the Ṛgvedic period the Aryans attained high level in knowledge, power and social organization. Entire Sanskrit literature praises vedic culture and civilization. The vedas contain the ideas of philosophy, religion, codes of conduct and sciences. Subsequent ages recognize the vedic age as the ideal one.

From the end of the Ṛgvedic period to the age of the Mahābhārata it is to be noticed that many non-Aryan tribes were absorbed in the Aryan society. In the epics the term Dasyu was applied to the tribes such as Kirāta. Yavana, Savara

1 India of Vedic Kalpasutras. ch. XXII. pp. 468-69.

etc. who were under the social system of the Aryans and were also encouraged to imitate their standard of life. The non-Aryans had different culture. They used different language and did not follow vedic rituals or injunctions nor worshipped vedic deities. They were non-sacrificers and worshippers of phallus.

Rv. VII. 21. 5. No evil spirits have impelled us, Indra, nor fiends, O Mightiest God, with their devices. Let our true God subdue the hostile rabble: let not the lewd approach our holy worship.

Owing to fusion through marriage and friendship the differences gradually disappeared. In the Purusasukta of the Ṛgveda such assimilation had been recognized; the four castes related to the limbs of the creator.

'Five peoples' in the Ṛgveda—comprising four castes and the Nisādas (Nirukta VI. 7) offered sacrifices to Agni (Rv. X. 45.6). Another hymn described Agni as the 'chief priest of all the races five' (Rv. IX. 66. 20). It shows that the Nisādas enjoyed equal right with the four castes to offer sacrifices. In corroboration of this view a hymn may be cited—

Rv. IX. 65.23. Those pressed among Ārjikas, pressed among the active, in men's homes, or pressed among the Races five.

According to Vājasaneyi Samhita (XXVI. 2) 'all classes have an equal right to study tha veda,'

In the age of the sutras Āryāvarta was the principal centra of Aryan culture. Other parts of the land had not the same importance; certain places were considered as impure, Dharma Sutra of Baudhayana declared.

I. 1. 2. 14 "The people of Avanti, Anga, Magadha, Surashtra, Dakshināpatha, Upāvṛit, Sindhu and Sauvira are of mixed origin."

15. Having visited Āratta, Karaskara, Pundra, Sauvira, Vanga, Kalinga and Prānuna

> Punastome or Sarvaprishtha sacrifice must be performed by the person as a penance."

Baudhāyana proclaimed another injunction (Srauta Sutra XVIII. 13) that, if anybody became impure by visiting border lands namely Āratta, Gandhāra, Sauvira, Kāraskara and Kalinga expiatory sacrifice was to be performed,

The inhabitants of Āryāvarta were praised for their good conduct, while the people of other regions were highly condemned by the Sutrakaras.

"The inhabitants of the other regions, one may conjecture, had their own customs to guide their conduct and were not prepared to forsake them forthwith in favour of the customs and precepts recommended by the Sutrakaras; in other words, the inhabitants of the regions censured in the Baudhāyana Dharmasutra were beyond the pale of the cultural sway of the Sutrakaras."[1]

In spite of the prohibitions people of Āryāvarta began to settle outside their region and in course of time a large number of the Aryans migrated beyond Āryāvarta. Hence the boundaries of Āryāvarta expanded. The author of the Manusmriti defined Āryāvarta as stretching from the Eastem to the Western seas and from the Himalayas to the Vindhyas. This proves the expansion of the Argan culture.

" ....As Aryan culture expanded, schools of aboriginal sorcerers and medicine men managed to obtain a footing in Brahmanic order, just as aboriginal chiefs were certainly assimilated to the warrior class. Thus, it may well be, the proto-Hinduism of the Harappā culture was assimilated to the Aryan faith."[2]

With the advancement of Aryanization, common people faced new situations. The persons who fought in war enjoyed all the privileges of victory which were denied to the civil population; unequalness in the enjoyment led to

1 India of Vedic Kalpasutras. ch. V. p. 102.
2 The wonder that was India. p. 139.

the disappointment of the people. Some being unable to bear brought to an end of their lives ; others being frustrated went to the forest to live in solitude with prayer and meditation. It was the root cause of the system of Āranyaka.

" The Brahmanas had insisted already upon the way of works as constituting the summum bonum of men. Then came the revolt of the heretics which set the post-Brahmana world a—thinking as to the exact relations that ought to be subsisting between Karman and Jnāna. The Āranyakas in the spirit of true reform tried to reconcile the two in such a manner that the way of works might be maintained and yet subordinated to the way of knowledge an attempt which found its fulfilment in the Upanisads."[1] and "This was effected by formulating the theory of the Asramas or ' stages of life,' of which there seem to have been only three at first — student, house-holder and forester ; the fourth : the recluse being subsequently added. Thus the continuity of tradition was maintained and the circumstance was given an outward expression in as much as the Brahmanas, the Āranyakas and the Upanisads were made to constitute parts of one whole revealed texts."[2]

Taittiriya Āranyaka refers to the strict prohibitions which were to be observed in connection with ritual and seasonal studies. Chhandogyopanisad related (I. 10. 1-5) that one might be polluted by taking another's remnants of food and drink.

Before 800 B.C. not only the Chandālas but the Sudras also were considered as impure.

Sacrificial offerings such as milk and other food if touched by a Sudra became impure and unfit for sacred rites. Even the remnants of sacrificial food, would not be given to low persons. Chhandogyopanisad considered the progeny

1 Belvalkar and Ranade: History of Indian Philosophy. Vol. 2. p. 86.

2 Ibid. Page 54.

of a Chandāla as a dog or pig.[1] The same book also glorified the offering of the remnant of sacrificial food to a Chandāla.[2] This proves the gradual change of the prevailing idea.

There are certain other instances where better condition of the lowest class has been reflected.

Certain degraded Sudras were compelled to live outside the village or town resided by the Aryans. But in the Atharvaveda we find that blessings had been invoked for both the Aryans and the Sudras. Through the Vrātyastoma sacrifice the strangers would be admitted to the orthodox Aryan commune.

In the sutra period the Sudras were not a class of untouchables: Sudra servant in an Aryan family would be treated as a family member. Āpastamba allowed Śudra to cook food under the Superintendence of Aryans.

" Or Sudras may prepare food, under the superintendence of men of the first three castes."

(Āpastamba D. S. II. 2. 3. 4.)

Sudras were treated with courtesy. Gautama recognized mechanical arts to be practised by the Sudras (D. S. X. 60).

Gautama further prescribed certain rules in favour of the servile class.[3]

Dvijas had the right to study the Vedas and perform religious ceremonies ; but they were not of equal status in per-

1 V. 10.7.

2 V. 24.4. "Even if he gives what is left of his food to a chandāla, it would be offered in his (the chandālas) Vaisvānara Self."

3 Gaut. D. S. X. 61. "And the Ārya under whose protection he places himself, must support him even if he (becomes) unable to work."

62 "And a man of higher caste (who is his master and has fallen into distress must be maintained) by him."

63. "His hoard shall serve this purpose".

67. "If Aryans and non-Aryans interchange their occupations and conduct (the one taking that of the other, there is) equality (between them).

forming certain rites. Each caste had different rules for Nāmakarana, Chudākarman and Upanayana ceremonies.

In the Vedic period education was obligatory. There is a statement in the Veda 'Svādhyāyo adhyetavyah' which carried the idea that children should study the entire Veda. But in course of time it became impossible for ordinary student; because the Veda meant the Samhita, the Brahmana and the Vedangas. In the Chhandogyopanisad we find reference to the subjects for study and this enumerates the study of the Vedas with proper accent and intonation, grammar, poetry etc. General education had two parts—compulsory and optional. After the completion of the obligatory part a student had to take ceremonial bath and then, if intended could continue further study in the asrama of the preceptor. He could take the ceremonial bath at the end of higher study.

By the age of the Sutras various branches of knowledge developed and that led to the tendency for specialization in particular branches. In the Nirukta there are references to such persons who had specialized in different branches of study such as grammar, etymology, history and sacrificial science.[1]

In the Pāraskara Grihyasutra (II. 6. 8.) we find such persons who had specialized only in the science of sacrifice (yājnikas). The Vedas, Vedangas, Mimāmsā, Law, Logic had their specialists. The person who specialized in a particular branch of study acquired special title.

The Nakshatravidya (i.e. the science of lunar mansions) was a subject of study; it had great importance in determining the period of time which was essential for the performance of sacrifices. In course of time different schools of Astronomy emerged and in he Sutra period the science of Astronomy was recognized as a vedanga (Jyotish). Astrology also gained popularity; some people took it as profession.

1 Nirukta I. 12; II. 8; II. 16; VII. 4.

Baudhayana (D. S. II. 1. 2. 8) and Vasishtha (D. S. X. 21) condemned it highly.

Mathematical knowledge is necessary for the science of Astronomy and sacrifices: It can be easily inferred that the Vedic Indians had great knowledge in mathematics.

In a passage of the Taittiriya Upanisad (I. 11.) the educational policy of the past has been reflected. Aim of education was to make a good citizen. "After the student has finished his education, the teacher exhorts the disciple who is going back home to 'speak the truth' and to 'lead a virtuous life' and further advises him as to his duties and obligations as a member of society. In the course of this instruction, there is no indication of using what the student has studied either for the performance of sacrifices with svarga as the goal or for the investigation into the problem of the Absolute with a view to attaining final release. The whole trend of the final instruction is that he should lead an honoured and useful life as a citizen."[1]

In the Ṛgvedic period non-religious education was recognized. It has been expressed in various aspects of life and civilization, in agriculture, trade and industry. From the hymns of the Ṛgveda it can be inferred that technical, industrial and commercial education were introduced and as a result of it different kinds of occupation appeared.

Rv. IX. 112, 1. We all have various thoughts and plans,
and diverse are the ways of men.
The Brahman seeks the worshipper,
wright seeks the cracked,
and leech the maimed. Flow, Indu,
flow for Indra's sake.

2. The smith with ripe and seasoned
plants, with feathers of the birds of air,

1 The cultural heritage of India. p. 218.

With stones, and with enkindled flames,
seeks him who hath a store of gold.
Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.

3. A bard am I, my dad's a leech,
mammy lays corn upon the stones.
Striving for wealth, with varied plans,
we follow our desires like kine. Flow,
Indu, flow for Indra's sake.

Economic life of the society indicates the existence of non-religious education at that time. Society was formed mainly with two classes of people—labourers and privileged class. Labourers were the main props of the society but they remained under piliable positlon. Rich and privileged class exercised control over them as if their private property. In the vedic period, Sudras were the slaves and serfs. In the later vedic period a section of the Vaisyas—such as Rathakāra, Taksan was reduced to the position of the sudras, though their services were essential in the society. It can be easily surmised that social condition was not good for the ordinary people. Ruling power though strong was insecure. In the Satapatha Brahmana we find a reference to the revolt against the ruling authority. 'Now Dushtaritu Pauṁsayana had been expelled from the kingdom which had come to him through ten generations and the Srinjayas also expelled Revottaras Patava Kākra Sthapati' (XII. 9. 3. 1). From this statement it is evident that under special circumstances people expelled their ruler together with unpopular officials. A hymn in the Atharvaveda (III. 3) suggested to perform sacrifice for the reinstatement of an exiled king. Though kingship was hereditary and confined to the Kshatriya caste, sudra kings were not unknown.

From time immemorial there lived in India different races with their respective customs and religion. Indian culture is the result of assimilation of various cultural forms. Vrātyas were a group of people who did not follow vedic orthodoxy;

they were non-sacrificial race and had their own culture. Magadha and other parts of eastern India witnessed high development of vrātya culture. In that area the progress of Aryanizm was obstructed, because the Vrātyas were more powerful and well-organized than the Vedic Aryans. The Aryans deemed it necessary to convert them into their community. But the Vrātyas were not to give up their own habits and culture and as a result of it, the Vedic Aryans were influenced by the Vrātya culture.

"The Indo-Aryan culture is itself a synthetic product and some of its attributes have been ascribed to the Vrātyas of Magadha. In some quarters it has rightly been held that the Upanisads and the Puranas were either produced in the Vrātya region or have been greatly influenced by the Vrātya sources."[1]

The principal gods of the Vrātyas, such as Rudra, Isāna and Mahadeva, were the manifestations of the Ekvrātya who was regarded as the Supreme being of the universe.

"D. R. Bhandarkar believes that the Ekvrātya later on developed into Siva. The Ekvrātya was infused with a serenity and loftiness that is unparalleled in our religion. Puṁscali or harlot, associated with the Ekvrātya, was replaced by sraddhā or faith. Māgadha (magi priest?) was substituted by Mitra. Knowledge became his garments, day and night his cap and hair, and Mātarisvā and Pavamāna were connected with him as the horses of his chariots. He became a great Tapasvī and practised penance for one year and as a result thereof, the Saiva system underwent a complete metamorphosis."[2]

In the Indus valley civilization we find reference to Siva and Sivalinga. Sir Mortimer Wheeler observes: "No uncertainty at least attaches to the divinity of the seated 'Siva' of the seals, a figure which, even in these small scale

1 Vrātyas in ancient India. p. 32.
2 Ibid. pp. 38-39.

representations, is replete with the brooding, minatory power of ths great god of historic India. Here if anywhere may be recognized one of the pre-Aryan elements which were to survive the Aryan invasions and to play a dominate role in the so-called Aryan culture of the post Vedic period. Another such element was phallus-worship, a non-Aryan tradition which appears, to have obtained amongst the Harappāns."[1]

Siva cult of the later period developed from the blending of many characteristics of different Vedic deities, particularly of Rudra—the Ṛgvedic god of storm and destruction. In the vedas the character of Rudra underwent great changes. In the Svetasvataropanisad Rudra or Siva had been extolled as the one God. Upanisads represent the assimilation and adoption of the ritual and philosophy of the indigenous people.

Bhakti :cult and Krishna worship may be traced in the vedic period. In the Ṛgveda Vishnu had been described as the Sun god. His three steps represented the Sun at its rise, its zenith and its setting. (Rv. I. 22. 17) Vishnu appeared as identical with time.

Satapatha Brahmana remarked: "Now he who is this Vishnu is the Sacrifice, and he who is this sacrifice is yonder Āditya (the Sun)........." (XIV. 1.1.6)

Doctrine of Bhakti or devotion for Vishnu is first met with in the Upanisads. Vasudeva Krishna who preached the philosophical teachings in the Bhagavat Gita was identified with Vishnu.

1 The Indus civilization. p. 89.

CHAPTER V

SOCIETY

In the early Ṛgvedic period caste system was unknown, but the social conditions which were the basis of such development were present. The Vedic Aryans when first came in India were in classes; in a Ṛgvedic hymn the existence of class-division can be presumed.

Rv. VIII. 35. 16 Give spirit to our prayer and animate our thoughts;
slay ye the Rākshasas and drive away disease.
Accordant, of one mind with Surya and with Dawn, the presser's Soma, Aṣvins! drink.

17. Strengthen the Ruling Power, strengthen the men of war; slay ye the Rākshasas and drive away disease. Accordant, of one mind with Surya and with Dawn, the presser's Soma, Aṣvins! drink.

18. Give strength unto the milch-kine, give the people strength,
slay ye the Rākshasas and drive away disease.
Accordant, of one mind with Surya and with Dawn, the presser's soma, Aṣvin's! drink.

Prayer was offered to Aṣvins for the prosperity of the Brahmanas, the Kshatriyas and the Vaisyas.

The distinction between the conquerors and the conquered led to the great division between the twice-born and the once-born i.e. the sudras. The sudra class was formed with those primitive inhabitants who took service under the lordship of the Aryans. Dāsas were known as sudras. The twice-born was under three-fold divisions—the priestly class (Brahmanas),

the ruling class (Kshatriyas) and the cultivators (Vaisyas). The Aryans always tried to keep the Sudras away from their community, because the Sudras were the lowest class in society. The Brahmanas framed strict rules and regulations mainly to keep the Sudras apart, so that their own community might not be polluted with the introduction of low blood. Over and above, there were also honest motives—such as, to maintain, the purity of the sacred lore and the vedic rituals, their own ceremonial purity and their sense of superiority over the native population. Hence, the caste system owes its origin to the activities for the preservation of the Brahmanic culture.

In the famous Purusa-Sukta (X. 90) the names of the four castes of the later period had been mentioned.[1]

" Caste is the development of thousands of years, from the association of the many different racial and other groups in a single cultural system. It is impossible to show its origin conclusively, and we can do little more than faintly trace its development, since early literature paid scant attention to it ; but it is practically certain that caste did not originate from the four classes."[2]

There are differences of opinion—whether trades and professions of these three classes led to the formation of castes in the later period. But professions were not hereditary, rather could be followed by any Aryan member. Had the caste system developed into rigid form in the Vedic period then surely there would have been the mention of caste in the Ṛgveda. Rather, it is to be noted that priests had been referred as Kāru, Vipra, Kavi, Vedhas etc. in the Ṛgveda. For the warrior, the word ' Rājanya ' had been used. ' Visah ' denoted citizens in many places.

1 "When they divided the primeval being (Purusa) the Brahmana was his mouth, the Rājanya became his arms, the Vaisya was his thighs and from his feet sprang the Sudras". (X. 90.)

2 The wonder that was India. p. 148.

"The caste system may well be the natural response of the many small and primitive peoples who were forced to come to terms with a more complex economic and social system. It did not develop out of the four Aryan varṇas, and the two systems have never been thoroughly harmonized."[1]

The society was not so rigid ; some forms of interclass marriage were prevalent. Inter-marriage between the higher castes were permitted and sometimes Aryans took Sudra wives. In the Dharmasutras we find references to the courtezans (ganikas): Prostitute had been mentioned in the Srauta Sutras. In the Mahavrata festival there was a dialogue between a student and a hetaera. Baudhayana prescribed injunction relating to the prohibition of taking food given by a ganika.[2]

In the later Vedic period status of women degraded. They were excluded from the right of the Upanayana and other religious rites. Polyandry and intermarriage had been referred to in the post Ṛgvedic period.

Av. V. 17. 8. And if [there were] ten former husbands of a woman, not Brahmans—provided a Brahman has seized her hand he is alone her husband.

In the Sutra period the position of women was not so humble. Offering of pinda and water libation would be made to the female ancestors. Worthy women occupied the position of reverence and respect. Reference to the educated girl was not rare ; girls would be instructed in dancing and music also.

In the performance of domestic rituals women enjoyed certain rights. Wives took part in the rituals with their husbands; and when the husband was not at home wife could perform the fire worship.

"In this connection Gobhila quotes some authorities who

1 The wonder that was India, p. 150.
2 Baudhayana D. S. III. 6. 6. 10.

say 'His wife may offer the morning and evening oblations into the domestic fire, if it is so desired ; for his wife is (as it were his house, and that fire is the domestic fire' (Gobhila G. S. I. 3. 15-16)."[1]

In the Srauta sacrifices sacrificer's wife occupied an important position, her presence was essential in the ritual. In sacred rites she had to follow her husband. Dharmasutras prescribe 'father protects her in adolescence, the husband in youth, and the son in old age ; a woman does not deserve absolute independence.'[2]

The custom of Sati was not in practice. It was first mentioned in the Vishnu Dharmasutra (XXV. 14)[3] which was of later origin.

Gautama D. S. recognized the right of a widow to the property of her deceased husband, had that person died without any male issue.

"Sapindas (blood relations within six degrees), Sagotras (relations bearing a common family name), (or) those connected by descent from the same Rishi (Vaidika gotra) and the wife shall share (the estate) of a person deceased without (male) issue (or an appointed daughter)." (D. S. XXVIII. 21.)

In the early period purdah system was not in vogue. Women took part in the social and religious activities with men.

Rv. X. 86. 10. From olden time the matron goes to feast and general sacrifice.

Rv. *VIII. 31. 5.* *O Gods*, with constant draught of *milk*, husband and wife with one accord. Press out and wash the Soma juice.

1 India of Vedic Kalpasutras, p. 444.

2 Baudhayana D. S. II. 2. 3. 46; Vasishtha D. S. V. 3.

3 On the death of the husband a woman should either observe chastity or ascend to the funeral pyre of her husband.

Translations of the Dharmasutras (Gautama, Āpastamba) are from the Sacred Books of the East.

6. They gain sufficient food: They come united to the sacred grass, And never do they fail in strength.
7. Never do they deny or seek to hide the favour of the Gods: They win high glory for themselves.
8. With sons and daughters by their side they reach their full extent of life. Both decked with ornaments of gold.
9. Serving the Immortal one with gifts of sacrificial meal and wealth,

   They satisfy the claims of love and pay due honour to the Gods.

"There is evidence to show that women followed a number of professions like those of the dyers, embroiderers and basket makers, which also would indicate the absence of the purdah. The teaching profession followed by women down to the Sūtra period and the part taken by scholars like Gārgi in mixed public debates would also attest to the non-existence of the segregation of women. Women's participation in public meetings and debates however became less and less common in the later vedic period (Maitrayani Samhita IV, 7.4)"[1]

The non-Aryans who being defeated by the Aryans fled into the forests and mountains, did not remain content with themselves. Occasionally, they would harass the Aryans and created obstacles in their performances. They had unity among themselves under their own leader.

During the Brahmana period there were both the Aryan and non-Aryan kidgdoms in the south. The non-Aryan kingdoms were occupied by Andhras, Savaras, Pulindas and Mutibas.[2] "Andhra is the name of a people, and is mentioned with the Pundras, Sabaras, Pulindas and Mutibas, as

1 The cultural heritage of India p. 223.

2 Aitareya Brahmana, VII. 18.

being the outcastes resulting from the refusal of the fifty eldest sons of Visvāmitra to accept his adoption of Sunahsepa. It may fairly be deduced from this statement that these people were recognized as non-Aryans, as the Andhras certainly seem to have been."[1]

'Nisādas' were non-Aryan tribe; they were not under Aryan control—they were independent and settled aborigines, under the authority of their own leader.

"According to Pancavimsa Brahmana, there are four different kinds of 'outcastes'—viz., the hīna, who are merely described as depressed; those who have become outcastes for some sin (nindita); those who become outcastes at an early age, apparently by living among outcastes; and those old men who, being impotent (Same-nīcamedhra) have gone to live with outcastes."[2]

There were several groups of people who were non-Aryans in origin and lived beyond the Aryan social order. Chief of these groups was the Chandāla—a despised caste and believed to be the offspring of Sudra father and Brahmana mother. They were to live outside the Aryan village or town. Principal duty of the Chandālas was to carry and burn the dead bodies; they were also the executioners of criminals. According to Manu they should live beyond villages, near woods and hills, and in the cremation ground with their possessions, consisting of broken vessels, clothes of the dead persons, iron for ornament and dogs and donkeys.

Those people were called untouchables, outcastes etc. other classes of outcastes were Nisāda—a hunter, Kaivarta—fishing class, Karavara—leather worker. Rathakara (chariot-maker) though occupied respectable position in the early vedic period, later on was considered as impure Sudra or out-caste.

In the Vedas there is no reference to the qustion of un-

1 Vedic Index of names and Subjects. Vol-I. pp. 23-24.
2 Vedic Index of names and Subjects. Vol. 2. p. 342.

touchability. Baudhayana and Gautama mentioned a long list of untouchables in their Dharmasutras. Many factors such as class interest, racial hatred, conquest, social customs led to the origination of untouchables. There were two forms of untouchability—temporary pullution and permanent pollution. In the case of the former, temporarily impure person could regain his purity and formal status by observing certain purificatory rites. Chandāla, Swapaca and others like them, were impure from their birth. Manu condemned them for their uncivilized habitation and hateful work.

Manu X. 50. Near large public trees, in places for burning the dead, on mountains and in groves, let those tribes dwell, generally known and engaged in their several works.

51. The abode of a Chandāla and Swapaca must be out of the town; they must not have the use of entire vessels; their sole wealth must be dogs and asses.

52. Their clothes must be the mantles of the deceased; their dishes for food, broken pots; their ornaments, rusty iron; continually must they roam from place to place.

53. Let no man, who regards his duty religious and civil, hold any intercourse with them; let their transactions be confined to themselves and their marriages only between equals.

54. Let food be given to them in potsherds, but not by the hands of the giver, and let them not walk by night in cities or towns.

55. By day they may walk about for the purpose of work, distinguished by the king's badges; and they shall carry out the corpse of every

one, who dies without kindred: such is the fixed rule.[1]

In the post Vedic period we find that, most of the people lived in villages with the occupations of cultivation and pasturage. Much care would be taken for the abundant growth of corn; arable lands were well protected. Owner of land could not sell his property to an outsider. Village headman was to look after the prosperity of the village.

Baudhayana (D.S.I. 10. 25) used the terms 'Karu' and 'Silpajiva', which indicate, that, arts and crafts were the occupations of the people in those days. We find reference to medical profession also.[2]

There were several ports for the import and export of goods. Partnership in trade was known. Baudhayana mentioned customs duty for seaborne commodities.[3] System of Usury was in vogue. Gautama prescribed rules regarding the interest to be charged by the creditor.

D. S. XII. 29. The legal interest for money lent (is at the rate of) five Māshas a month for twenty (Kārshāpanas).

30. Some (declare, that this rate should not be paid) longer than a year.

31. If (the loan) remains outstanding for a long time, the principal may be doubled (after which interest ceases).

32. A loan secured by a pledge that is used (by the creditor) bears no interest.

33. Nor money tendered, nor (a debt due by a debtor) who is forcibly prevented (from paying).

1 Translations are from the Works of Sir William Jones.
2 Baudhayana D. S. II. 2. 5.
3 D. S. I. 18. 13.

34. (Special forms of interest are) compound interest, periodical interest.
35. Stipulated interest, corporal interest, daily interest and the use of a pledge.

As the Varnāsrama Dharma gained solidity, the four asramas or stages of life became regular. Education was mainly for the higher three castes. Even in the Sūtra period there was no educational institution for the public. The twice-born after the Upanayana ceremony used to stay in the house of the teacher as his family member and received proper education in philosophy, religion, ethics etc. The Sudras had no such right, they were deprived of all sorts of knowledge and culture; their main duty was to serve the higher three castes. All of them were not slaves but 'free-men,' as the term 'Sudra' included the native hill tribes who lived by hunting and fishing. Hence those who were non-Aryans were called Sudras. The Aitareya Brahmana (VII. 29. 4) described the Sudra as 'the servant of another' (anyasya presya), 'to be expelled at will' (Kamotthāpya), 'to be slain at will' (Yatha-Kamavadhya). The Sutra literature proclaimed the inferiority of the Sudras in various respects.

Gautama D.S. XII. 1. A Sudra who intentionally reviles twice-born men by criminal abuse, or criminally assaults them with blows shall be deprived of the limb with which he offends.

4. Now if he listens intentionally to (a recitation of) the Veda, his ears shall be filled with (molten) tin or lac.

5. If he recites (Vedic texts) his tougue shall be cut out.

6. If he remembers them, his body shall be split in twain.

7. If he assumes a position equal (to that of twice-born men) in sitting, in lying down, in conversation or on the road, he shall undergo (corporal) punishment.

Āpastamba D.S. I. 5. 17. 1. A Sudra touches him (then he shall leave off eating).

Āpastamba D.S. II. 10. 27. 15. A Sudra who assumes a position equal (to that of a member of one of the first three castes), in conversation, on the road, on a couch, in sitting (and on similar occasions) shall be flogged.

Pāraskara Grihya Sutra (I. 4. 11) recommended the marriage of a Sudra woman with any member of the higher three castes. Āpastamba (Griya Sutra II. 10. 27. 9) and Gautama (Grihya Sutra XII. 2. 3) highly condemned the union of an Aryan woman with a Sudra member.

The higher Varnas—The Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas through mutual compromise gained their interest to the largest extent. The Vaisyas, though classed as twice-born, had their position deteriorated in the later period. Manu and othar authorities on Samskara treated the Vaisyas with greater contempt and reduced their position almost equal to the rank of the Sudras.

"In sacred matters the distinction between Aryan and Sudra was, of course, specially marked. The texts do not hesitate to declare that the upper castes were 'all', ignoring the Sudras ; the Sudra is prohibited from milking the cow for the milk required at the Agnihotra (oblation to Agni) ; and the Satapatha Brahmana forbids a man who has been consecrated for a sacrifice to speak to a Sudra at all for the time, though the Śāṭyāyanaka seems to have relaxed this rule

by confining it to cases in which the Sudra was guilty of some sin. At the sacrifice itself the Sudra could not be present in the Sala, 'hall'; he is definitely classed in the Satapatha Brahmana and the Pancavimsa Brahmana as unfit for 'sacrifice'; and declared in the Kathaka Samhita not to be admitted to drink Soma. At the Pravargya (introductory Soma) rite the performer is not allowed to come in contact with a Sudra, who here, as in the Kathaka Samhita, is reckoned as excluded from a share in the Soma draught. On the other hand, the Sudra is one of the victims at the Purusamedha (human sacrifice) in the Yajurveda, and a fight between an Aryan and a Sudra, in which of course, the former wins, forms a part of the Mahāvrata rite...............".[1]

Different castes had their particular occupations; in times of distress the members of the higher castes could adopt the occupations of the lower caste. But the members of the lower caste were not allowed to follow the occupations of the higher castes.

"Normally the people adopted the occupations of their forefathers and did not dare to incur social wrath by deviating from family traditions. Castewise allocation of occupations was an established fact in the Sutra period. It hampered the free choice of occupations and did not allow full scope to the talents of all, but it had its bright side too. People acquired special skill and took keen interest in the work which they began to learn from their very childhood. Castewise allocation of occupations was accepted as a divine decree by the common run of men and it was not regarded as a social injustice. All sections of society made their due contribution to the welfare of society. Husbandmen produced abundant food grains to feed the whole nation; herdsmen reared plenty of livestocks to provide milk, meat, hides, fleece and means of transport; handicraftsmen manufactured necessary articles and implements; traders arran-

1 Vedic Index of names and Subjects. Vol. 2. pp. 389-90.

ged for the exchange of necessary commodities; administrators maintained peace and order; artistes entertained the people; and teachers and priests perpetuated cultural heritage and sublimed the thoughts and feelings of the people."[1]

In the Vedic period higher castes dominated in the society. The Brahmanas occupied the highest position and were respected by all sections of people. The Kshatriyas were the warrior and ruling class and had respectable position in the society. The Vaisyas occupied the position less dignified than the Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas. The Sudras had the lowest rank in society.

Manu had made three divisions of the Brahmanas—(i) teacher, (ii) priest and preacher and (iii) Statesman i.e., wise Counsellor in statė affairs. The Brahmanas claimed their supremacy in religious and intellectual spheres because of their origin from the sacred mouth of the Supreme being. Other twice-born castes had the right of study the sacred Vedas but not to teach; that was the exclusive right of the Brahmanas.

The Kshatriyas had the greatest power in military and ruling activities; the Vaisyas had the right of agriculture cattle—rearing, trade, commerce and banking,—hence honour for the Brahmanas, power and authority for the Kshatriyas and wealth for the Vaisyas. The Sudras had the only duty to serve the higher castes. Throughout the contents of the Dharmasutras the Sudras had been consigned to the position of contempt and humiliation. Manu forbade the upper castes to reside with a large number of Sudras;[2] according to him the land where the Sudras live in large number must perish with death and disease.

Pancavimsa Brahmana remarked that (VI. 1. 11) even a rich Sudra was no other than a servant with the duty of wash-

1 India of Vedic Kalpasutras. p. 132.
2 Manu VIII. 22.

ing the feet of his superiors. Mahabharata denied the ownership on the part of a Sudra.[1] According to Manu even in the legal matters preference should be given in order of the superiority of castes (VIII. 24).

The Brahmanas enjoyed uncommon preference to that of the Kshatriyas and the Vaisyas. The Sudras had no right of legal and religious injunctions.

Regarding the extension of the Aryan culture and civilization we find a glimpse in the Satapatha Brahmana.

1. 4. 1. 14. Māthava, the Videgha, was at that time on the (river) Sarasvati. He (Agni) thence went burning along this earth towards the east ; and Gotama Rahugana and the Videgha Mathava followed after him as he was burning along. He burnt over (dried up) all these rivers. Now that (river), which is called 'Sadānirā flows from the northern (Himalaya) mountain: That one he did not burn over. That one the Brahmanas did not cross in former times, thinking, 'it has not been burnt over by Agni Vaisvanara.

15. Now-a-days, however, there are many Brahmanas to the east of it. At that time it (the land east of the Sadānirā) was very uncultivated, very marshy, because it had not been tasted by Agni Vaisvānara.

16. Now-a-days however, it is very cultivated, for the Brahmanas have caused (Agni) to taste it through sacrifices. Even in late summer that (river) as it were, rages along: so cold is it, not having been burnt over by Agni Vaisvānara.

17. Mathava, Videgha, then said (to Agni) 'where am I to abide' ? 'To the east of this (river) be thy abode' ! said he. Even now this (river)

1 XII. 30. 7.

> forms the boundary of the Kosalas and Videhas; for these are the Mathavas (or descendants of Mathava).

In the Ṛgvedic period towns and cities were very few in number; we hear of iron cities (Rv. I. 58. 8 ; II. 20. 8 ; IV. 27. 1). cities with hundred fortifications (Rv. I. 166. 8 ; VII. 15. 14.), cities of stones (Rv. IV. 30. 20) and also of fortified places called 'Pur.' But there is no clear evidence of city life. It is surmised that those fortified places were resorted to in times of emergency, such as—attack from enemies at the end of the monsoon or flooding of the plains etc.

In the Sutra literature we find reference both to the towns and villages. Āpastamba Dharmasutra prescribed injunction for the persons, appointed by the king, in the protection of towns and villages.

II. 10. 26. 6. They must protect a town from thieves in every direction to the distance of one Yojana.

7. (They must protect the country to the distance of) one Krosa from each village.

Kausika Sutra, Vasistha Dharmasutra and Baudhayana Dharmasutra condemned the towns as quite unsuitable for sacred studies and higher religious activities. Āpastamba disapproved the frequent visit of a town by a Snātak.

D. S. I. 11. 32. 21. Nor shall he enter towns frequently.

It is proved that urban life was disliked by the authors of the Sutras.

People were mainly rural and lived in villages. Village was formed with a group of dwellings erected near each other and surrounded by some protective measures. Agriculture was the chief occupation of the people. In the Ṛgveda we find a prayer for agricultural prosperity.

"Vouchsafe to us the bounty, that which we
implore, through which,
for child and progeny.

Ye give the seed of corn that wasteth not away,
and bliss that reacheth to all life.

(Rv. V. 53. 13).

In the Atharvaveda we find prayer, for prosperous agricultural ground:

XII. 1. 4. Let that earth be full of cattle and corn for us which is open on all four sides, in which farmers grow corn and which bears living beings of all types.

6. Let the earth give us fire (life) and wealth, which is supporter of all, yielder of different corns, firm footing for all life, breast of gold (Keeper of wealth), feeder of the world, keeper of all sorts of life and nourisher of the wise and the godly,

10. Let the earth give us nourishment as the mother gives such to her babe.

11. O earth, let thy hills, rocks and mountains be auspicious to us. May I unconquered, unkilled, unwounded, settle on the earth which is rich, cultivable, fit to produce all sorts of crops, firm, expanded and well-guarded.

12. The earth is my mother, I am the earth's son. Rain is my father. Let him bring us up.

13. Let that enriched soil enrich us.

36. O earth, may summer, rainy season, winter, autumn, chilly season, spring, in short all seasons yield to us all kinds of produce.

42. We bow respectfully to well irrigated earth, the consort of rain, in which grow corn, paddy and barley and whose children are all people.

> 43. On whose breast do grow big towns on which agriculturists do their tillage. which has in its womb all kinds of nourishment, may the Lord of Universe, make that earth habitable for us.

In the Yajurveda there is a mention of the types of grains which the Vedic Aryans produced (XVIII. 12). Industry, arts and crafts were not neglected in the rural civilization. Agriculture and handicrafts had inseparable position; as the number of activities increased handicrafts became separated from agriculture.

CHAPTER VI

STABLE FORMS

Some aspects of the vedic culture and civilization remained almost unchanged or slightly changed throughout the vedic age. These may be enunciated as below:

Dress, ornament and decorations. From the study of the vedic literature, it is clear that the vedic Aryans were well-dressed and fond of decorations. They wore garments of different colours—sometimes decked with gold. The raiment of men almost resembled those of women. The Ṛgvedic Aryans wore generally a pair of garments—the Vāsas or lower garment and adhivāsas—the over garment. In the later period 'Nivi' (under garment) was used. 'Atka' (garment) and drapi (cloak) were also used by the people. Women dancers wore a kind of embroidered garment.[1] Vādhuya was worn by the bride at the marriage ceremony.

In the Satapatha Brahmana we hear of a set of sacrificial garments which consisted of a silken under garment (tarpya), an over garment and a turban (ushnisha). Turban was used both by men and women. Uncoloured woollen garment and sandal or shoe, made of boar skin were in use. In the Kausitaki Brahmana there is a mention of 'Dandopanaha' (staff and sandals).

In the Sutra period proper dress consisted of Uttariya (upper) and Antariya (lower) clothing. Turban was made with a large piece of cloth, wrapped round the head. Garments made of deer-skin or goat-skin were considered as sacred. Clothes were generally made of cotton, linen, wool, silk and hemp. In the vedic period people wore adequate and costly clothings, which represented their good taste as well as

1 Rv. I. 92.4.

fanciful nature. In the Sutra period, we find, change of taste; people chose necessary and simple dresses instead *of gorgeous and unnecessary clothings.*

In ancient period men and women wore ornaments. For each season there were particular kinds of ornaments and people wore them at the beginning of the season. In the vedic literature we find the names of some ornaments, like—'Karnasobhana' a kind of golden ear ornament for men and kurira, nyochani head ornaments for the brides. 'Khadi' was worn as an armlet or anklet. 'Nishka', 'Mani' were ornaments for neck. 'Rukma' was worn on the breast. In the Atharvaveda we hear of Pravarta—a kind of ear-ring. In the Brahmana literature there are names of ornaments—as Sthagara, Prākasa etc.

At the Samāvartana ceremony ornaments like ear-rings, jewels were worn. At the sacrificial ceremony sacrificer and his wife used to wear golden chains. In the Āpastamba Srautasutra[1] there is a description of a large number of ornaments in connection with Asvamedha sacrifice.

Flowers and flower garlands were very popular and had great importance at the ceremonies and religious rites.

Hair dressing was practised both by men and women. Generally plaits were worn by women, but there are references to such men, who had their hair plaited. (Rv.VII. 33. 1).

Other articles for decorations were collyrium, fragrant substance etc. Some decorative articles were essential for the marriage ceremony. In the Atharvaveda collyrium had been praised. Fragrant substances were necessary at the Samāvartana ceremony also. Umbrella and staff were used as equipment both by gentlemen and Snātaka.

The above references prove that in ancient India ornamentation and decorations were highly prized by all sections of people, not merely from social stand point, but sometimes religious importance would be attached to them.

1. XX. 15. 9.

Food and drink. Milk and milk-products formed the principal part of diet of the Vedic Aryans. Cakes prepared from parched grain, fruits and vegetables were also to be eaten. Meat would be taken on special occasions like religious festivals. Generally the flesh of ox, sheep, goat would be taken when sacrificed at the religious ceremonies. The flesh of horse would be taken at horse sacrifices only. In the Satapatha Brahmana and in the Vājasaneyi Samhita cooked rice had been mentioned. Consumption of rice and barley increased in the Sutra period. Wheat, beans (māsha), kidney beans (mudga), mustard seed (sarshapa), sesamum were the articles of food. Warm milk-just after drawing, was a favourite drink. Surā, prepared from grains and honey were also popular beverage. Soma was a sacrificial drink. In the post Ṛgvedic period we find the list of a large number of products prepared from milk and grains. In the Atharvaveda Surā had been condemned,[1] but in the Sutra period we find its ample use. Yajurveda Samhitas mentioned a new beverage called māsara.

Sports and festivities. Play at dice was a very popular game. Horse race, chariot-race were amusing to the people. Festive gatherings, known as Samājas or Samavayas were places for amusement.

From a hymn in the Ṛgveda (X. 34), it is learnt that, gambling had great charm to some persons. Dance, music, dramatic performances were largely practised. In the Sutra period music, both vocal and instrumental would be performed at the festivities. Mahabrata festival was delightful to all sections of people; it would be enlivened with different kinds of musical instruments and with fun and frolic. From a statement in the Gautama Dharmasutra (XV. 18)[2] it is learnt

1 VI. 70. 1.

2 "(Nor shall he feed)
by playing musical instruments or by beating time, by dancing and by signing".

that some people earned their livelihood by dancing and singing. Hunting had been practised as sport and profession.[1]

By dramatic performances some people earned their livelihood. The Sutrakaras were of opinion that, students should not attend or take part to dancing or singing.

Stories and historical narratives would be recited at the performances of Asvamedha and Rajasuya sacrifices. During the period of mourning members of the bereaved family listened to the Gathas, Itihasas and Puranas.

House Construction. In the vedic period houses were generally made of wood, though there are references to iron-pillard and gold decorated houses. As the joint family system was in vogue, houses were large with special space for Garhapatya fire and small enclosures for domestic animals. In the Ṛgveda an entire hymn had been devoted to the chief architect Vastoshpati.

Rv. VII. 54. 1 Acknowledge us, O Guardian of the Homestead:
bring no disease, and give us happy entrance.
Whate'er we ask of thee be pleased to grant it,
and prosper thou our quadrupeds and bipeds.

2 Protector of the Home, be our promoter:
increase our wealth in kine and steeds, O Indu.
May we be ever-youthful in thy friendship:
be pleased in us as in his sons a father.

3 Through thy dear fellowship that bringeth welfare, may we be victors,
Guardian of the Dwelling!
Protect our happiness in rest and labour.
Preserve us evermore, ye Gods, with blessings.

A hymn in the Atharvaveda (IX. 3) glorified a dwelling house thus:

1 AV. X 1. 30; VIII. 8.5.

Av. IX. 3. 11. He who fixed thee, O dwelling, [who] brought together the forest trees-unto progeny,
O dwelling, he, [as a] most exalted Prajapati, made thee.

12. Homage to him, homage to the giver, and to the lord of the dwelling we pay; homage to the forth-moving fire, and to thy spirit (be) homage.

16. Rich in refreshment, rich in milk, fixed built upon the earth, bearing all food,
O dwelling, do not thou injure those accepting (thee).

21. The house may be two-sided, four sided, six-sided, eight sided or even ten-sided. The house is the peace-giver to mind. I take shelter in it as fire in its womb.

The word 'Patninām Sadana' indicates that, a portion of the house would be kept as female apartment.

Grihyasutras prescribed certain rules to be followed in constructing a house. A house must have several rooms for different purposes. Regarding the situation of different rooms Āsvalāyana Grihyasutra prescribed—"The place where waters flowing together from all sides to its centre flow on the northern side of the bed room towards the east without making any noise, possesses all auspicious qualities. The kitchen should be built on the spot from which waters flow off, because such a kitchen is rich in food. The drawing room (sabhā) should be built on the spot which is sloping down to the south ; then there will be no gambling in it. But in such a drawing room young people become fraudulent and quarrelsome and they die a premature death. The drawing room should, therefore, be built on the spot to which waters flow from all directions ; this brings luck and is free from gambling." (II. 7. 6-11).[1]

1 'India of Vedic Kalpasutras'

Agriculture and irrigation: In the Vedic society agriculture and cattle-rearing were the mainstay of the people. Even for a destitute person it was the only means of livelihood. Prayers had been offered for success in Agriculture. In a Ṛgvedic hymn (IV. 57) various agricultural personifications, such as Kshetrapati, Sunasira, Sitā had been addressed.

Rv. IV. 57. 1. We through the Master of the Field, even as through a friend, obtain
What nourisheth our kine and steeds.
In such may he be good to us.

2. As the cow yieldeth milk, pour for us freely, lord of the Field, the
wave that beareth sweetness, Distilling meath, well-purified like butter,
and let the Lords of the holy Law be gracious.

3. Sweet be the plants for us, the heavens, the waters, and full of sweets for us be air's mid-region.
May the Field's Lord for us be full of sweetness, and may we follow after him uninjured.

4. Happily work our steers and men, may the plough furrow happily.
Happily be the traces bound ; happily may he ply the goad.

5. Suna and Sira welcome ye this laud, and with the milk which ye have made in heaven.
Bedew ye both this earth of ours.

6. Auspicious Sitā, come thou near ;
we venerate and worship thee
That thou mayst bless and prosper us
and bring us fruits abundantly.

7. May Indra press the furrow down,
   may Pushan guide its course aright.
   May she (furrow) as rich in milk, be drained
   for us through each succeeding year.
8. Happily let the shares turn up the plough-land, happily go the ploughers with the oxen.
   With meath and milk Prajanya makes
   us happy.
   Grant us prosperity, Suna and Sira.

In the Atharvaveda also we find such prayer.

Av. III. 17. 1. "The poets (Kavi) harness the plows (sira). They extend severally the yokes—they the wise ones (dhira) with desire of favour toward the Gods.

2. Harness ye the plows, extend the yokes; scatter the seed here in the prepared womb ; may the bunch of virāj be burdened for us ; may the sickles draw in the ripe (grain) yet closer.
3. Let the plow, lance-pointed, well-lying with well-smoothed handle, turn up cow, sheep, an on-going chariot-frame, and a plump wench.
4. Let Indra hold down the furrow ; let Pūshan defend it ; let it rich in milk yield to us each further summer.
5. Successfully let the good plowshares thrust apart the earth ; successfully let the plowmen follow the beasts of draft ; O çunā Sīrā, do ye (two), dripping with oblation, make the herbs rich in berries for this man.
6. Successfully let the draft-animals, successfully the men, successfully let the plow (lāngala) plow, successfully let the straps be bound ; successfully do thou brandish the goad.

7. O çunāsīrā, do ye (two) enjoy me here; what milk ye have made in heaven, therewith pour ye upon this [furrow].
8. O furrow, we reverence thee; be [turned] hitherward, O fortunate one, that thou mayest be well-willing to us, that thou mayest become of good fruit for us.
9. With ghee, with honey [is] the furrow all anointed, approved by all the gods, by the Maruts;
   do thou, O furrow, turn hither unto us with milk, rich in refreshment, swelling with fulness of ghee."

The Vedas impart the knowledge of cultivation and how to grow better and abundant crops. Various agricultural implements had been referred to and the working of the ploughshare had been specifically mentioned. In the Ṛgvedic age 'Yava' was the principal grain. Cultivation of rice was of a later period. The Vedas instruct the processes for gathering crops. The ripe corns having been cut down with the sickle and then binding into bundles would be thrashed on the floor of the granary. With the help of the sieve or winnowing fan grains were to be separated from the straw and refuse, then measuring in a vessel called 'urdara' the grains would be preserved in a repository known as Sthivi.

Farmers took great care of the land and were always alert regarding the fertility of the soil, because the well-being of the people depended upon the enriched soil.

AV. XII. 1. 7. Only that soil yields sweet food, which is well looked after by learned persons, without sleeping or negligence. Such a soil is the giver of all things.

The use of cow-dung to make the soil fertile was in vogue.[1] During the Sutra period leasehold system was in practice[2]

1 AV. III. 14.3; XIX. 31.3.
2 Āpastamba D. S. II. 11 28.1.

For watering the land people did not solely depend upon rain. Well and artificial waterways such as 'Kulya' (Rv. III. 45. 3 ; X. 43. 7) and 'Khanitrima apah' (Rv. VII. 49. 2) were used for the purpose of irrigation. Wells dug and used for irrigating the land had been expressed in the Ṛgvedic hymns.[1] The word 'Avata' frequently used in the Ṛgveda denoted 'well.' Drawing of water from the well had also been described.

Rv. X. 101. 5. Arrange the buckets in their place:
securely fasten on the straps
We will pour forth the well that hath copious stream, fair flowing well that never fails.

6. I pou rthe water from the well with pails prepared and goodly straps
unfailing, full, with plenteous stream.

Baudhayana Dharmasutra[2] referred to public well and dams. In the Atharvaveda there is a reference to the digging of a canal.

Av. III. 13. 7. This, O waters, [is] your heart, this your young (vatsa), ye righteous ones ; come thus hither, ye mighty ones, where I now make you enter.

In the Sutra period agriculture had the vital role in the economy of the country. Gautama D. S. mentioned the protection of crops.[3]

Domestication of animals. In the vedic period both cows and horses were sacred, and occupied the highest position among other animals. Householder prayed to God to have more cows and horses along with other domestic happiness.

Rv. VII. 54. 2. Protector of the Home, be our promoter :
increase our wealth in kine and steeds,
O Indu.

1 Ṛv. I. 55. 8; VIII. 69. 12, 72. 10.; X. 102.11.
2 II. 3. 5. 5-6.
3 XII. 18.

May we be ever-youthful in thy friendship:
be pleased in us as in his sons a father.

" " 90. 6. May these who give us heavenly light,
these rulers, with gifts of kine and horses,
gold and treasures,
These princes, through full life, Indra and
Vāyu ! O'ercome in battle with
their steeds and heroes.

Rv. X. 108. 7. Paved with the rock is this our treasure—
chamber ;
filled full of precious things, of kine and
horses.
The Panis who are watchful keepers
guard it. In vain hast thou approached
this lonely station.

Rv. VI. 39. 5. Now praised, O Ancient King, fill thou the
singer with plenteous food that he may
deal forth treasures.
Give waters, herbs that have no poison,
forests and kine and steeds and men,
to him who lauds thee.

Prayers had been offered for protection and well-being of the cattle along with other things.

Rv. I. 114. 8. Harm us not, Rudra, in our steed and progeny, harm us not in the living, nor
in cows or steeds.
Slay not our heroes in the fury of thy
wrath. Bringing oblations evermore
we call to thee.

Rv. VII. 104. 10. The friend, O Agni, who designs to injure
the essence of our food, kine, steeds
or bodies,
May he, the adversary, thief and robber,
sink to destruction, both himself and
offspring.

In the Ṛgvedic hymn we find the mention of camels along with other animals.

Rv. VIII. 46. 22. Steeds sixty thousand and ten thousand kine,
and twenty hundred camels I obtained ;
Ten hundred brown in hue, and other ten
red in three spots: in all, ten
thousand kine.

31. And in the grazing herd he made a
hundred camels bleat for me,
And twenty hundred mid the white.

Dogs were tamed specially to guard the house. Sheep and goats were reared, for getting their wool and flesh.

Occupation. In the Ṛgvedic age agriculture and cattle rearing were the chief occupations of the people. In course of time the sphere of economic activity extended. In the Brahmana period various arts and crafts were known ; further development occurred in the Sutra period and as a result of it, new occupations appeared. It was not possible for ordinary person to acquire knowledge in every branch of arts, crafts and sciences ; hence necessity for specialization in a particular branch was felt. Each branch became an independent occupation and consequently, number of occupations increased. Dharmasutras prescribed the occupations of each caste, as for example, teaching and priesthood for the Brahmanas, military and administrative functions for the Kshatriyas ; agriculture, cattle-rearing, trade and commerce for the Vaisyas, and for the Sudras were fishing hunting, handicrafts and menial services. "Agriculture and cattle rearing were so common that all those who failed to earn their livelihood by teaching, priesthood, trade and military service resorted to them."[1] Occupation of a cultivator was not at all disrespectful, even the higher caste could adopt it in times of distress: Sudras also were allowed to follow.

1 India of Vedic Kalpasutras. ch. VII. p. 132.

"Farmers were generally required to pay one-sixth of the agricultural produce as land revenue to the king."[1]

Occupation of the weaver was well-known ; clothes would be made of cotton. wool, hemp etc. For sacrificial purposes clothes of Kusa were made. In the Sutra period weaving industry developed to a great extent. Yarn was spun with charka : all the preliminary processes of weaving had been practised.

In the Vedic society carpentry had great importance for the making of ploughs, carts, chariots and household furture. Chariot making was so requisite that the chariot-makers were separated from the group and the Sūtrakāras framed different rules and regulations for their sacrificial performances. Skill of a carpenter had been expressed in the Vedic hymn.

Rv. IX. 111. 3. He moves intelligent, directed to the East.
The very beauteous car rivals the
beams of light, the beautiful
celestial car.

Smithery was not unknown. Gold-smith prepared various kinds of ornaments from gold and silver. Blacksmith produced articles of iron, copper and bell metal. According to Baudhayana articles made of copper, silver and gold should be purified with acids.

Pottery was essential for the manufacturing of vessels and earthenware, which were necessary for domestic and sacrificial purposes.

Mirror, as referred to in the Sutras, prove the existence of glass iudustry. Leather industry was developing gradually. Tannery and the use of hides for making bowstrings, reins, lash of the whip and various other articles were well-known. Weaving, spinning, sewing and plaiting of mats were the important domestic industries in the vedic period. In the Brahmana period we find the prevalence of a large number

1 India of Vedic Kalpasutras. ch. VII. p. 133.

of professions and occupations among which may be mentioned the names, like ferrymen. washermen. butcher, potter, moneylender, barber, cook, messenger etc. In the Sutra period cottage industry was highly celebrated. The artisans were in guilds which had their rules for the guidance and management of the members. Hence, economic condition of the people improved to a greater extent. We can find clear references to the progress, in the sphere of different arts and crafts. Āpastamba and Baudhayana referred to medical profession. Exportation of the commodities was encouraged by the State. Different kinds of interest prove the prevalence of usury among the people. The practice of deposit to others was in vogue.[1]

Trade and maritime activity. In the Ṛgvedic period inland trade was in full practice. There are also references of trading in distant lands.

Rv. I. 56. 2. To him the guidance—following songs of praise flow full, as those who seek gain go in company to the flood.

Panis were expert traders. In the Atharvaveda prayer had been offered for success in trade.

Av. III. 15. 1. I stir up the trader Indra ; let him come to us, be our forerunner thrusting [away] the niggard, the waylaying wild animal, let him, having the power, be giver of riches to me.

2. The many roads travelled by the Gods, that go about between heaven and earth—let them enjoy me with milk, with ghee, that dealing I may get riches.

3. With fuel, O Agni, with ghee, I, desiring, offer the oblation, in order to energy, to strength ;—revering with worship, so far as

1 Gautama D. S. XII. 39.

I am able—this divine prayer, in order to hundred-fold winning.

4. This offence of ours mayest thou, O Agni, bear with, what distant road we have gone. Successful for us be bargain and sale; let return—dealing make me fruitful; do ye two enjoy this oblation in concord; successful for us be our going about and rising.
5. With what riches I practise bargaining, seeking riches with riches, ye gods—let that become more for me, not less;
O Agni, put down with the oblation the gainslaying gods.
6. With what riches I practise bargaining, seeking riches with riches, ye gods—therein let Indra assign me pleasure, let Prajapati, Savitar, Soma, Agni.
7. Unto thee with homage do we, O priest Vaicvanara (for all men), give praise; do thou watch over our progeny, ourselves, our kine, our breaths.
8. Every day may we bring constantly for thee as for a standing horse, O Jatavedas; rejoicing together with abundance of wealth, with food, may we thy neighbours, O Agni, take no harm.

Organization of traders was well-known, even in the Ṛgvedic age. 'Sresthins', of the later vedic period were the chiefs of trade guilds, In the Sutra period we hear of a rite called 'Panyasiddhi'.[1] in which a portion of the article for trade would be sacrificed with prayer for success.

Ship-building industry was not so developed. Ships used for seaborne trade were propelled by oars as the use of mast, or sail was unknown.

1 Hiranyakesi Grihya Sutra I. 15. 1.

Exchange. In the Ṛgvedic period articles generally would be exchanged for securing another commodity. Standard of value was the cow ; It is clearly expressed in a Ṛgvedic hymn.

Rv. IV. 24, 10. Who for ten milch-kine purchaseth
from me this Indra who is mine ?,
When he hath slain the Vritras let the
buyer give him back to me.

The seller thought that ten cows were not adequate for an image of Indra. Another passage shows the haggling between the buyer and the seller.

Rv. IV. 24. 9. He bid a small price for a thing of value:
I was content, returning, still unpurchased.
He heightened not his insufficient offer.
Simple and clever, both milk out the udder.

In the Atharvaveda also we find reference to the barter system[1].

The word 'Nishka' in the Ṛgveda had double sense—ornament and money. Perhaps, at first it meant ornament and later on, was used as gold coin. A hymn in the Ṛgveda suggests the existence of pieces of gold for certain fixed value.

Rv. I. 126. 2. A hundred necklets from the king,
beseeching, a hundred gift-steeds
I atonce accepted ;
of the lord's cows a thousand, I
Kakshivan.
His deathless glory hath he spread to
heaven.

In the later vedic period barter system ceased ; gold coins gradually disappeared. Copper coin named 'Kahapana' was used as the medium of exchange. System of exchange brought into existence trade and commerce. With the gradual development of commerce, precious metals came to be used as money, in place of cattle.

1 AV. III. 15. 4.

Practice of medicine. In the most ancient period medicine was known; it was mainly herbal. In the Ṛgveda Rudra had been described as the physician of physicians.

II. 33, 2. With the most saving medicines which thou givest, Rudra, may I attain a hundred winters.
Far from us banish enmity and hatred, and to all quarters maladies and trouble.

4. Let us not anger thee with worship, Rudra, ill praise, strong God ! or mingled invocation,
Do thou with strengthening balms incite our heroes; I hear thee famed as best of all physicians.

13. Of your pure medicines, O potent Maruts, those that are wholesomest and health-bestowing,
Those which our father Manu hath selected, I crave from Rudra for our gain and welfare.

The entire hymn X. 97. of the Ṛgveda addressed to the 'Osadhis' (plants) with praises of their curative-powers. Aṣvins were the great healers. The Ṛgvedic mantras (I. 116. 16; VIII. 18. 8, 22. 10; X. 39. 3) praised Aśvins for their excellent healing power.

From a hymn in the Ṛgveda it can be inferred that, surgery was practised in that remote age.

Rv. I. 116. 15. When in the time of night, in Khela's battle, a leg was severed like a wild bird's pinion.
Straight ye gave Viṣpalā a leg of iron that she might move what time the conflict opened.

16. His father robbed Ṛijrāṣva of his eye-sight who for the she-wolf slew a hundred wethers.

Ye gave him eyes, Nāsatyas, Wonder-Workers, Physicians, that he saw with sight uninjured.

Hydropathy also was known.

"In the waters there is healing balm" (Rv. I. 23. 19 ;

The waters hold all medicines

(Rv. I. 23. 20, 21).

Animal sacrifice furnished some help to the knowledge of anatomy. The method of treatment as found in the Atharvaveda, proves that the knowledge of Pathology was in an elementary stage. Incantations were also used to remove the ailments. In the Atharvaveda there are references to the treatment of various diseases such as jaundice, dysentry, ulcer, etc. In the Brahmana period the profession of the physician was well-established.[1]

Disposal of the dead body. For the disposal of the dead body, cremation as well as burial were practised by the Aryans. In the following passage we find such reference.

Rv. X. 16. 1. Burn him not up, nor quite consume him, Agni : let not his body or his skin be scattered,
O, Jātavedas, when thou hast matured him, then send him on his way unto the Fathers.

" " 18. 10. Betake thee to the lap of Earth the Mother, of Earth far spreading, very kind and gracious.
Young Dame, wool-soft unto the guerdon-giver, may she preserve thee from Destruction's bosom.

" " " 11. Heave thyself, Earth, nor press thee downward heavily : afford him easy access, gently tending him.

1 Taittiriya Brahmana. III. 4. 4. 1.

cover him as a mother wraps her skirt
about her child, O Earth.

" " " 12. Now let the heaving earth be free from
motion : yea, let a thousand clods
remain above him.
Be they to him a home distilling
fastness, here let them ever be his
place of refuge.

The vedic Aryans believed the existence of the next world where the spirit of the deceased person perceive the consequence of his former birth.

Rv. X. 14. 7. Go forth, go forth, upon the ancient pathways whereon our sires of old have gone
before us.
There shalt thou look on both the kings
enjoying their sacred food, God Varuṇa
and Yama.

8. Meet Yama, meet the Fathers,
meet the merit of free or ordered acts,
in highest heaven.
Leave sin and evil, seek anew thy
dwelling, and bright with glory wear
another body.

10. Run and outspeed the two dogs,
Saramā's offspring, brindled, four-eyed,
upon thy happy pathways.
Draw high then to the gracious-minded
Fathers where they rejoice in company
with Yama.

After the burning of the corpse, the bones and ashes being kept in an urn would be deposited in a pit. The urn had been addressed thus:

Rv. X. 18. 13. I stay the earth from thee,
while over thee I place this piece of earth.
May I be free from injury.

Here let the Fathers keep this pillar firm
for thee and there let Yama make thee
an abiding-place,

The entire hymn X. 16. addressed to the funeral fire. In another hymn (X, 18) the God of death had been invoked and the funeral rites of the deceased had been described.

The Vedic Aryans maintained the doctrine of rebirth.

Rv. X. 59. 7. May Earth restore to us our vital spirit,
may Heaven the Goddess and mid-air
restore it.
May Soma give us once again our body,
and Pushan show the Path of peace and
comfort.

Av. VII. 67. 1. May I again receive my sense organs
in my future life and may I receive my
spirit, together with wordly possession
and knowledge divine so that I may
perform fire offering on the alters and
may ever attain prosperity.

Prayer. Sacrificial offerings were generally accompanied with prayer. There were several religious rites where prayer alone fulfilled the purpose of the ceremony.

Prayer was co-related with sacrifice and in the sacrificial ceremony it was the fundamental element.

Sacrifice. Sacrifice occupied the most important position among the different forms of Vedic religion. Through the sacrifice the worshipper and the worshipped came in close vicinity. The worshipper humbly offered, with the hope of getting the desired object, through the benevolence of God.

Three sacred fires, either produced by the friction of the two aranis or borrowed from the house of a renowned sacrificer would be installed in the sanctuary. Gārhapatya fire was for the purpose of warming the sacrificial dishes and

to prepare the offerings. Ahavaniya fire was established to the east and *the offerings to God would be thrown into* it. Daksina fire was placed in the south; it was for the pitṛs and the demons.

During the Soma sacrifice and the four monthly seasonal sacrifices the old Ahavaniya fire would be rejuvenated by adding new fire to it.

In the vedic ritual Agni occupied the most important position; Agni carried the oblations to the Gods in heaven and also brought the Gods to the sacrificial ground on earth.

Rv. VII. 11. 5. O Agni, bring the Gods to taste our presents: with Indra leading, here let them be joyful.
Convey this sacrifice to Gods in heaven.
Ye Gods, preserve us evermore with blessings.

Vedic deities. In the pre-vedic period the Aryans were the worshippers of Nature; their deities were Mitra—the Sun, Varuna—the God of the night or blue sky, Dyu and Prithivi—the sky and the earth, and Agni—the fire.

In the Ṛgveda we find the name Aditi, who was regarded as the Mother of all the Gods. Max Muller says: 'Aditi, an ancient God or Goddess is in reality the earliest name invented to express the infinite; not the Infinite as the result of a long process of abstract reasoning, but the visible Infinite, visible by the naked eye, the endless expanse, beyond the earth beyond the clouds, beyond the sky.[1] Ṛgveda also describes:

Rv. I. 89. 10. Aditi is the heaven, Aditi is the mid-air,
Aditi is the Mother and the Sire and son.
Aditi is all Gods, Aditi five-classed men,
Aditi all that hath been born and shall be born.

1 Ṛgveda I. p. 230.

According to the sages of the Ṛgveda, the universe consisted of three different planes of existence—the highest plane—Dyuloka or celestial sphere, then Antariksaloka—the intermediary sphere and the third Bhurloka or the terrestrial sphere. Each of the spheres had its presiding deity, namely, Savitri or Surya—of the celestial world, Indra or Vayu—of the intermediary space and Agni (Fire) of the terrestrial region. These three were made thirty-three in number: thus each sphere had eleven Gods.

Rv. I. 139. 11. O ye Eleven Gods whose home is heaven,
O ye Eleven who make earth your dwelling,
Ye who with might, Eleven, live in waters,
accept this sacrifice, O Gods with pleasure.

Satapatha Brahmana divided them into eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, twelve Adityas, Dyu (sky) and Pṛthivi (Earth). Twelve Adityas were the twelve names of the Sun for each month of the year (XI. 6, 3. 8). In the Ṛgveda the number of these thirty-three Gods increased into three thousand three hundred and thirty nine.

Rv. III. 9. 9. Three times a hundred Gods and thrice a thousand, and three times ten and nine have worshipped Agni,
For him spread sacred grass, with oil bedewed him and stablished him as priest and sacrificer.

According to Sāyana the last number was merely the enumeration of the glories of the thirty three Gods, mentioned previously. The number of Gods increased to thirty three crores—meaning the multitude of the deities—presiding over different appearances of nature and life. The Vedic sages conceived the existence of some spiritual beings behind the lifeless nature and the active elemental forces.

The great number of the deities was recognized by the sages and it was conceived that all the deities were benevolent in character and poured blessings to the sacrificer.